

# Some Decisive Battles of the World

From Marathon to Waterloo

BY

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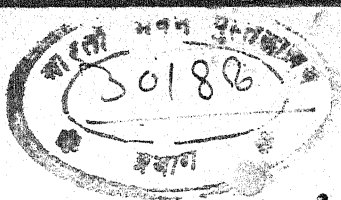
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## PREFACE

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It is an honourable characteristic of the Spirit of this age, that projects of violence and warfare are regarded among civilized states with gradually increasing aversion. The Universal Peace Society certainly does not, and probably never will, enrol the majority of statesmen among its members. But even those who look upon the Appeal of Battle as occasionally unavoidable in international controversies, concur in thinking it a deplorable necessity, only to be resorted to when all peaceful modes of arrangement have been vainly tried; and when the law of self-defence justifies a State, like an individual, in using force to protect itself from imminent and serious injury. Yet it cannot be denied that a fearful and wonderful interest is attached to these scenes of carnage. There is undeniable greatness in the disciplined courage, and in the love of honour, which make the combatants confront agony and destruction. And the powers of the human intellect are rarely more strongly displayed than they are in the Commander, who regulates, arrays, and leads at his will these masses of armed disputants; who, yet daring, in the midst of peril, reflects on all, and provides for all, ever ready with fresh resources and plans, as the vicissitudes of the storm of slaughter dire. But these qualities, however high they may appear, are to be found in the basest as well as in the noblest of mankind. Catiline was as brave a soldier as Hannibal, and a much better officer. Alva surpassed the

Prince of Orange in the field; and Suwarrow was the military superior of Kosciusko. To adopt the emphatic words of Byron—

“T is the Cause makes all,  
Degrades or hallows courage in its fall”.

There are some battles, also, which claim our attention, independently of the moral worth of the combatants, on account of their enduring importance, and by reason of the practical influence on our own social and political condition, which we can trace up to the results of those engagements. They have for us an abiding and actual interest; both while we investigate the chain of causes and effects by which they have helped to make us what we are, and also while we speculate on what we probably should have been, if any one of those battles had come to a different termination.

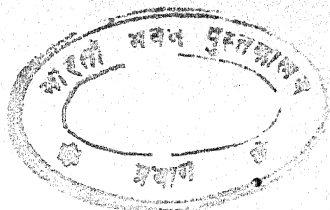
It is probable, indeed, that no two historical inquirers would entirely agree in their lists of the Decisive Battles of the World. Different minds will naturally vary in the impressions which particular events make on them; and in the degree of interest with which they watch the career, and reflect on the importance, of different historical personages.

MITRE COURT CHAMBERS, TEMPLE,  
June 26, 1851.

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In this edition of Creasy's *Decisive Battles of the World* considerable excisions have been made to suit the taste of young readers. Otherwise no alterations have been made in, or liberties taken with, the text of a book so well known, and of which nearly fifty editions have been called for.

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"History is the grand subject a student will take to. There is one precept very useful: never read it without a map beside you; endeavour to seek out every place the author names, and get a clear idea of the ground you are on. Mark the dates of the chief events and epochs; write them, get them fixed into your memory. Chronology and Geography are the two lamps of History."

—*Carlyle.*

# SOME DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE WORLD

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BATTLE OF MARATHON, B.C. 490

"The mountains look on Marathon  
And Marathon looks on the sea."—*Byron*.

About two thousand four hundred years ago, a council of Athenian officers was summoned on the slope of one of the mountains that look over the plain of Marathon, on the eastern coast of Attica. The immediate subject of their meeting was to consider whether they should give battle to an enemy that lay encamped on the shore beneath them; but on the result of their deliberations depended, not merely the fate of two armies, but the whole future progress of human civilization.

A famous  
council  
of war.

There were eleven members of that council of war. Ten were the generals, who were then annually elected at Athens, one for each of the local tribes into which the Athenians were divided. Each general led the men of his own tribe, and each was invested with equal military authority. One also of the Archons was associated with them in the joint command of the collective force. This magistrate was termed the Polemarch or War-ruler: he had the privilege of leading the right wing of the army in battle, and of taking part in all councils of war. A noble Athenian, named Callimachus, was the War-ruler of this year; and, as such, stood listening to the earnest

discussion of the ten generals. They had, indeed, deep matter for anxiety, though little aware how momentous to mankind were the votes they were about to give, or how the generations to come would read with interest the record of their debate. They saw before them the invading forces of a mighty empire, which had in the last fifty years shattered and enslaved nearly all the kingdoms and principalities of the then known world. They knew that all the resources of their own country were comprised in the little army entrusted to their guidance. They saw before them a chosen host of the Great King, sent to wreak his special wrath on that country, and on the other insolent little Greek community, which had dared to aid his rebels and burn the capital of one of his provinces. That victorious host had already fulfilled half its mission of vengeance. Eretria, the confederate of Athens in the bold march against Sardis nine years before, had fallen in the last few days; and the Athenian generals could discern from the heights the island of Ægilia, in which the Persians had deposited their Eretrian prisoners, whom they had reserved to be led away captives into Upper Asia, there to hear their doom from the lips of King Darius himself. Moreover, the men of Athens knew that in the camp before them was their own banished tyrant, Hippias, who was seeking to be reinstated by foreign scimitars in despotic sway over any remnant of his countrymen that might survive the sack of their town, and might be left behind as too worthless for leading away into Median bondage.

The numerical disparity between the force which the Athenian commanders had under them, and that which they were called on to encounter, was fearfully apparent to some of the council. The historians who wrote nearest to the time of the battle do not pretend to give any detailed statements of the numbers engaged, but there are sufficient data for our making a general estimate. Every free Greek was trained to military duty: and, from the incessant border wars between the different states, few Greeks reached the age of manhood without having seen some service. But the muster-roll of

free Athenian citizens of an age fit for military duty never exceeded thirty thousand, and at this epoch probably did not amount to two-thirds of that number. Moreover, the poorer portion of these were unprovided with the equipments, and untrained to the operations of the regular infantry. Some detachments of the best-armed troops would be required to garrison the city itself, and man the various fortified posts in the territory; so that it is impossible to reckon the fully-equipped force that marched from Athens to Marathon, when the news of the Persian landing arrived, at higher than ten thousand men.

With one exception, the other Greeks held back from aiding them. Sparta had promised assistance; but the Persians had landed on the sixth day of the moon, and a religious scruple delayed the march of Spartan troops till the moon should have reached its full. From one quarter only, and that a most unexpected one, did Athens receive aid at the moment of her great peril.

For some years before this time, the little state of Platæa in Bœotia, being hard pressed by her powerful neighbour, Thebes, had asked the protection of Athens, and had owed to an Athenian army the rescue of her independence. Now when it was noised over Greece that the Mede had come from the uttermost parts of the earth to destroy Athens, the brave Plateans, unsolicited, marched with their whole force to assist in the defence, and to share the fortunes of their benefactors. The general levy of the Plateans only amounted to a thousand men: and this little column, marching from their city along the southern ridge of Mount Cithæron, and thence across the Attic territory, joined the Athenian forces above Marathon almost immediately before the battle. The reinforcement was numerically small; but the gallant spirit of the men who composed it must have made it of tenfold value to the Athenians: and its presence must have gone far to dispel the cheerless feeling of being deserted and friendless, which the delay of the Spartan succours was calculated to create among the Athenian ranks.

*March of the men  
of Platea.*

Thracian princes. This occurred at the time when Pisistratus was tyrant of Athens. Two of the relatives of Miltiades—an uncle of the same name, and a brother named Stesagoras—had ruled the Chersonese before Miltiades became its prince. He had been brought up at Athens in the house of his father Cimon, who was renowned throughout Greece for his victories in the Olympic chariot-races, and who must have been possessed of great wealth. The sons of Pisistratus, who succeeded their father in the tyranny at Athens, caused Cimon to be assassinated, but they treated the young Miltiades with favour and kindness; and when his brother Stesagoras died in the Chersonese, they sent him out there as lord of the principality. This was about twenty-eight years before the battle of Marathon, and it is with his arrival in the Chersonese that our first knowledge of the career and character of Miltiades commences. We find, in the first act recorded of him, proof of the same resolute and unscrupulous spirit that marked his mature age. His brother's authority in the principality had been shaken by war and revolt: Miltiades determined to rule more securely. On his arrival he kept close within his house, as if he was mourning for his brother. The principal men of the Chersonese, hearing of this, assembled from all the towns and districts, and went together to the house of Miltiades on a visit of condolence. As soon as he had thus got them in his power, he made them all prisoners. He then asserted and maintained his own absolute authority in the peninsula, taking into his pay a body of five hundred regular troops, and strengthening his interest by marrying the daughter of the king of the neighbouring Thracians.

When the Persian power was extended to the Hellespont and its neighbourhood, Miltiades, as prince of the Chersonese, submitted to King Darius; and he was one of the numerous tributary rulers who led their contingents of men to serve in the Persian army in the expedition against Scythia. Miltiades and the vassal Greeks of Asia Minor were left by the Persian king in charge of the bridge across the Danube, when the invading army crossed that river, and plunged into the



wilds of the country that now is Russia, in vain pursuit of the ancestors of the modern Cossacks. On learning the reverses that Darius met with in the Scythian wilderness, Miltiades proposed to his companions that they should break the bridge down, and leave the Persian king and his army to perish by famine and the Scythian arrows. The rulers of the Asiatic Greek cities whom Miltiades addressed, shrank from this bold and ruthless stroke against the Persian power, and Darius returned in safety. But it was known what advice Miltiades had given; and the vengeance of Darius was thenceforth specially directed against the man who had counselled such a deadly blow against his empire and his person. The occupation of the Persian arms in other quarters left Miltiades for some years after this in possession of the Chersonese; but it was precarious and interrupted. He, however, availed himself of the opportunity which his position gave him of conciliating the good-will of his fellow-countrymen at Athens, by conquering and placing under Athenian authority the islands of Lemnos and Imbros, to which Athens had ancient claims, but which she had never previously been able to bring into complete subjection. At length, in 494 B.C., the complete suppression of the Ionian revolt by the Persians left their armies and fleets at liberty to act against the enemies of the Great King to the west of the Hellespont. A strong squadron of Phœnician galleys was sent against the Chersonese. Miltiades knew that resistance was hopeless; and while the Phœnicians were at Tenedos, he loaded five galleys with all the treasure that he could collect, and sailed away for Athens. The Phœnicians fell in with him, and chased him hard along the north of the Ægean. One of his galleys, on board of which was his eldest son, Metiochus, was actually captured; but Miltiades, with the other four, succeeded in reaching the friendly coast of Imbros in safety. Thence he afterwards proceeded to Athens, and resumed his station as a free citizen of the Athenian commonwealth.

The Athenians at this time had recently expelled Hippias, the son of Pisistratus, the last of their tyrants. They were in

the full glow of their newly-recovered liberty and equality; and the constitutional changes of Cleisthenes had inflamed their republican zeal to the utmost. Miltiades had enemies at Athens; and these, availing themselves of the state of popular feeling, brought him to trial for his life for having been tyrant of the Chersonese. The charge did not necessarily import any acts of cruelty or wrong to individuals: it was founded on no specific law; but it was based on the horror with which the Greeks of that age regarded every man who made himself compulsory master of his fellow-men, and exercised irresponsible dominion over them. The fact of Miltiades having so ruled in the Chersonese was undeniable; but the question which the Athenians, assembled in judgment, must have tried, was, whether Miltiades, by becoming tyrant of the Chersonese, deserved punishment as an Athenian citizen. The eminent service that he had done the state in conquering Lemnos and Imbros for it, pleaded strongly in his favour. The people refused to convict him. He stood high in public opinion; and when the coming invasion of the Persians was known, the people wisely elected him one of their generals for the year.

Two other men of signal eminence in history, though their renown was achieved at a later period than that of Miltiades,

How did  
Themistocles and  
Aristides vote?

were also among the ten Athenian generals at Marathon. One was Themistocles, the future founder of the Athenian navy and the destined victor of Salamis: the other was Aristides, who afterwards led the Athenian troops at Platea, and whose integrity and just popularity acquired for his country, when the Persians had finally been repulsed, the advantageous pre-eminence of being acknowledged by half of the Greeks as their impartial leader and protector. It is not recorded what part either Themistocles or Aristides took in the debate of the council of war at Marathon. But from the character of Themistocles, his boldness, and his intuitive genius for extemporizing the best measures in every emergency (a quality which the greatest of historians ascribes to him beyond all his contemporaries), we may well believe that the vote of Themistocles was for prompt and decisive

action. On the vote of Aristides it may be more difficult to speculate. His predilection for the Spartans may have made him wish to wait till they came up; but, though circumspect, he was neither timid as a soldier nor as a politician; and the bold advice of Miltiades may probably have found in Aristides a willing, most assuredly it found in him a candid, hearer.

Miltiades felt no hesitation as to the course which the Athenian army ought to pursue: and earnestly did he press his opinion on his brother-generals. Practically acquainted with the organization of the Persian armies, Miltiades was convinced of the superiority of the Greek troops, if properly handled: he saw with the military eye of a great general the advantage which the position of the forces gave him for a sudden attack, and as a profound politician he felt the perils of remaining inactive, and of giving treachery time to ruin the Athenian cause.

One officer in the council of war had not yet voted. This was Callimachus, the War-ruler. The votes of the generals were five and five, so that the voice of Callimachus would be decisive.

The casting  
vote of  
Callimachus.

On that vote, in all human probability, the destiny of all the nations of the world depended. Miltiades turned to him, and in simple soldierly eloquence, the substance of which we may read faithfully reported in Herodotus, who had conversed with the veterans of Marathon, the great Athenian thus adjured his countryman to vote for giving battle:—

“It now rests with you, Callimachus, either to enslave Athens, or, by assuring her freedom, to win yourself an immortality of fame, such as not even Harmodius and Aristogeiton have acquired. For never, since the Athenians were a people, were they in such danger as they are in at this moment. If they bow the knee to these Medes, they are to be given up to Hippias, and you know what they then will have to suffer. But if Athens comes victorious out of this contest, she has it in her to become the first city of Greece. Your vote is to decide whether we are to join battle or not. If we do not

bring on a battle presently, some factious intrigue will disunite the Athenians, and the city will be betrayed to the Mædes. But if we fight, before there is anything rotten in the state of Athens, I believe that, provided the Gods will give fair play and no favour, we are able to get the best of it in the engagement."

The vote of the great War-ruler was gained; the council determined to give battle; and such was the ascendancy and military eminence of Miltiades, that his brother-generals, one and all, gave up their days of command to him, and cheerfully acted under his orders. Fearful, however, of creating any jealousy, and of so failing to obtain the co-operation of all parts of his small army, Miltiades waited till the day when the chief command would have come round to him in regular rotation, before he led the troops against the enemy.

The inaction of the Asiatic commanders, during this interval, appears strange at first sight; but Hippias was with them, and they and he were aware of their chance of a bloodless conquest through the machinations of his partisans among the Athenians. The nature of the ground also explains, in many points, the tactics of the opposite generals before the battle, as well as the operations of the troops during the engagement.

The plain of Marathon, which is about twenty-two miles distant from Athens, lies along the bay of the same name on the north-eastern coast of Attica. The plain is nearly in the form of a crescent, and about six miles in length. It is about two miles broad in the centre, where the space between the mountains and the sea is greatest, but it narrows towards either extremity, the mountains coming close down to the water at the horns of the bay. There is a valley trending inwards from the middle of the plain, and a ravine comes down to it to the southward. Elsewhere it is closely girt round on the land side by rugged limestone mountains, which are thickly studded with pines, olive-trees, and cedars, and overgrown with the myrtle, arbutus, and the other low odoriferous shrubs that everywhere perfume the Attic air. The level of the ground is now varied by the mound raised over

those who fell in the battle, but it was an unbroken plain when the Persians encamped on it. There are marshes at each end, which are dry in spring and summer, and then offer no obstruction to the horseman, but are commonly flooded with rain, and so rendered impracticable for cavalry, in the autumn, the time of year at which the action took place.

The Greeks, lying encamped on the mountains, could watch every movement of the Persians on the plain below, while they were enabled completely to mask their own. Miltiades also had, from his position, the power of giving battle whenever he pleased, or of delaying it at his discretion, unless Datis were to attempt the perilous operation of storming the heights.

When Miltiades arrayed his men for action, he staked on the arbitrement of one battle not only the fate of Athens, but that of all Greece; for if Athens had fallen, no other Greek state, except Lacedæmon, would have had the courage to resist; and the Lacedæmonians, though they would probably have died in their ranks to the last man, never could have successfully resisted the victorious Persians, and the numerous Greek troops, which would have soon marched under the Persian satraps, had they prevailed over Athens.

What if  
Athens  
had failed?

Nor was there any power to the westward of Greece that could have offered an effectual opposition to Persia, had she once conquered Greece, and made that country a basis for future military operations. Rome was at this time in her season of utmost weakness. Her dynasty of powerful Etruscan kings had been driven out, and her infant commonwealth was reeling under the attacks of the Etruscans and Volscians from without, and the fierce dissensions between the patricians and plebeians within. Etruria, with her Lucumos and serfs, was no match for Persia. Samnium had not grown into the might which she afterwards put forth: nor could the Greek colonies in South Italy and Sicily hope to survive when their parent states had perished. Carthage had escaped the Persian yoke in the time of Cambyses, through the reluctance of the Phœnician mariners to serve against their kinsmen. For such for-

bearance could not long have been relied on, and the future rival of Rome would have become as submissive a minister of the Persian power as were the Phœnician cities themselves. If we turn to Spain, or if we pass the great mountain chain which, prolonged through the Pyrenees, the Cevennes, the Alps, and the Balkan, divides Northern from Southern Europe, we shall find nothing at that period but mere savage Finns, Celts, Slaves, and Teutons. Had Persia beaten Athens at Marathon, she could have found no obstacle to prevent Darius, the chosen servant of Ormuzd, from advancing his sway over all the known Western races of mankind. The infant energies of Europe would have been trodden out beneath universal conquest; and the history of the world, like the history of Asia, would have become a mere record of the rise and fall of despotic dynasties, of the incursions of barbarous hordes, and of the mental and political prostration of millions beneath the diadem, the tiara, and the sword.

Great as the preponderance of the Persian over the Athenian power at that crisis seems to have been, it would be unjust to impute wild rashness to the policy of Miltiades, and those who voted with him in the Athenian council of war, or to look on the after-current of events as the mere result of successful indiscretion. As before has been remarked, Miltiades, whilst prince of the Chersonese, had seen service in the Persian armies; and he knew by personal observation how many elements of weakness lurked beneath their imposing aspect of strength. He knew that the bulk of their troops no longer consisted of the hardy shepherds and mountaineers from Persia Proper and Kurdistan, who won Cyrus's battles: but that unwilling contingents from conquered nations now largely filled up the Persian muster-rolls, fighting more from compulsion than from any zeal in the cause of their masters. He had also the sagacity and the spirit to appreciate the superiority of the Greek armour and organization over the Asiatic, notwithstanding former reverses. Above all, he felt and worthily trusted the enthusiasm of the men under his command.

The Athenians, whom he led, had proved by their new-born

valour in recent wars against the neighbouring states, that "Liberty and Equality of civic rights are brave spirit-stirring things: and they who, while under the yoke of a despot, had been no better men of war than any of their neighbours, as soon as they were free, became the foremost men of all; for each felt that in fighting for a free commonwealth, he fought for himself, and, whatever he took in hand, he was zealous to do the work thoroughly". So the nearly contemporaneous historian describes the change of spirit that was seen in the Athenians after their tyrants were expelled; and Miltiades knew that in leading them against the invading army, where they had Hippias, the foe they most hated, before them, he was bringing into battle no ordinary men, and could calculate on no ordinary heroism. As for traitors, he was sure, that whatever treachery might lurk among some of the higher-born and wealthier Athenians, the rank and file whom he commanded were ready to do their utmost in his and their own cause. With regard to future attacks from Asia, he might reasonably hope that one victory would inspirit all Greece to combine against the common foe; and that the latent seeds of revolt and disunion in the Persian empire would soon burst forth and paralyse its energies, so as to leave Greek independence secure.

With these hopes and risks, Miltiades, on the afternoon of a September day, 490 B.C., gave the word for the Athenian army to prepare for battle. There were many local associations connected with those mountain heights, which were calculated powerfully to excite the spirits of the men, and of which the commanders well knew how to avail themselves in their exhortations to their troops before the encounter. Marathon itself was a region sacred to Hercules. Close to them was the fountain of Macaria, who had in days of yore devoted herself to death for the liberty of her people. The very plain on which they were to fight was the scene of the exploits of their national hero, Theseus; and there, too, as old legends told, the Athenians and the Heraclidæ had routed the invader, Eurystheus. These traditions were not mere cloudy myths,

or idle fictions, but matters of implicit earnest faith to the men of that day: and many a fervent prayer arose from the Athenian ranks to the heroic spirits who while on earth had striven and suffered on that very spot, and who were believed to be now heavenly powers, looking down with interest on their still beloved country, and capable of interposing with superhuman aid in its behalf.

According to old national custom, the warriors of each tribe were arrayed together; neighbour thus fighting by the side of neighbour, friend by friend, and the spirit of emulation and the consciousness of responsibility excited to the very utmost. The War-ruler, Callimachus, had the leading of the right wing; the Plateans formed the extreme left; and Themistocles and Aristides commanded the centre. The line consisted of the heavy-armed spearmen only. For the Greeks (until the time of Iphicrates) took little or no account of light-armed soldiers in a pitched battle, using them only in skirmishes or for the pursuit of a defeated enemy. The panoply of the regular infantry consisted of a long spear, of a shield, helmet, breast-plate, greaves, and short sword. Thus equipped, they usually advanced slowly and steadily into action in an uniform phalanx of about eight spears deep. But the military genius of Miltiades led him to deviate on this occasion from the commonplace tactics of his countrymen. It was essential for him to extend his line so as to cover all the practicable ground, and to secure himself from being outflanked and charged in the rear by the Persian horse. This extension involved the weakening of his line. Instead of an uniform reduction of its strength, he determined on detaching principally from his centre, which, from the nature of the ground, would have the best opportunities for rallying if broken; and on strengthening his wings, so as to ensure advantage at those points; and he trusted to his own skill, and to his soldiers' discipline, for the improvement of that advantage into decisive victory.

In this order, and availing himself probably of the inequalities of the ground, so as to conceal his preparations from the enemy till the last possible moment, Miltiades drew up the



eleven thousand infantry whose spears were to decide this crisis in the struggle between the European and the Asiatic worlds. The sacrifices, by which the favour of Heaven was sought, and its will consulted, were announced to show propitious omens. The trumpet sounded for action, and, chanting the hymn of battle, the little army bore down upon the host of the foe.

Instead of advancing at the usual slow pace of the phalanx, Miltiades brought his men on at a run. They were all trained in the exercises of the palaestra, so that there was no fear of their ending the charge in breathless exhaustion: and it was of the deepest importance The Greeks advance with a run. for him to traverse as rapidly as possible the space of about a mile of level ground, that lay between the mountain foot and the Persian outposts, and so to get his troops into close action before the Asiatic cavalry could mount, form, and manœuvre against him, or their archers keep him long under bow-shot, and before the enemy's generals could fairly deploy their masses.

"When the Persians", says Herodotus, "saw the Athenians running down on them, without horse or bowmen, and scanty in numbers, they thought them a set of madmen rushing upon certain destruction." They began, however, to prepare to receive them, and the Eastern chiefs arrayed, as quickly as time and place allowed, the varied races who served in their motley ranks. Mountaineers from Hyrcania and Afghanistan, wild horsemen from the steppes of Khorassan, the black archers of Ethiopia, swordsmen from the banks of the Indus, the Oxus, the Euphrates, and the Nile, made ready against the enemies of the Great King. But no national cause inspired them, except the division of native Persians; and in the large host there was no uniformity of language, creed, race, or military system. Still, among them there were many gallant men, under a veteran general; they were familiarized with victory; and in contemptuous confidence their infantry, which alone had time to form, awaited the Athenian charge. On came the Greeks, with one unwavering line of levelled

spears, against which the light targets, the short lances and scimitars of the Orientals offered weak defence. The front rank of the Asiatics must have gone down to a man at the first shock. Still they recoiled not, but strove by individual gallantry, and by the weight of numbers, to make up for the disadvantages of weapons and tactics, and to bear back the shallow line of the Europeans. In the centre, where the native Persians and the Sacæ fought, they succeeded in breaking through the weaker part of the Athenian phalanx; and the tribes led by Aristides and Themistocles were, after a brave resistance, driven back over the plain, and chased by the Persians up the valley towards the inner country. There the nature of the ground gave the opportunity of rallying and renewing the struggle: and meanwhile, the Greek wings, where Miltiades had concentrated his chief strength, had routed the Asiatics opposed to them; and the Athenian and Platean officers, instead of pursuing the fugitives, kept their troops well in hand, and wheeling round they formed the two wings together. Miltiades instantly led them against the Persian centre, which had hitherto been triumphant, but which now fell back, and prepared to encounter these new and unexpected assailants. Aristides and Themistocles renewed the fight with their reorganized troops, and the full force of the Greeks was brought into close action with the Persian and Sacian divisions of the enemy. Datis's veterans strove hard to keep their ground, and evening was approaching before the stern encounter was decided.

But the Persians, with their slight wicker shields, destitute of body-armour, and never taught by training to keep the even front and act with the regular movement of the Greek infantry, fought at grievous disadvantage with their shorter and feebler weapons against the compact array of well-armed Athenian and Platean spearmen, all perfectly drilled to perform each necessary evolution in concert, and to preserve an uniform and unwavering line in battle. In personal courage and in bodily activity the Persians were not inferior to their adversaries. Their spirits were not yet cowed by the recollec-

tion of former defeats; and they lavished their lives freely, rather than forfeit the fame which they had won by so many victories. While their rear-ranks poured an incessant shower of arrows over the heads of their comrades, the foremost Persians kept rushing forward, sometimes singly, sometimes in desperate groups of twelve or ten, upon the projecting spears of the Greeks, striving to force a lane into the phalanx, and to bring their scimitars and daggers into play. But the Greeks felt their superiority, and though the fatigue of the long-continued action told heavily on their inferior numbers, the sight of the carnage that they dealt amongst their assailants nerved them to fight still more fiercely on.

At last the previously unvanquished lords of Asia turned their backs and fled, and the Greeks followed, striking them down, to the water's edge, where the invaders were <sup>Rout of the</sup> now hastily launching their galleys, and seeking to <sup>Persians.</sup>

embark and fly. Flushed with success, the Athenians dashed at the fleet. "Bring fire, bring fire!" was their cry; and they began to lay hold of the ships. But here the Asiatics resisted desperately, and the principal loss sustained by the Greeks was in the assault on the fleet. Here fell the brave War-ruler Callimachus, the general Stesilaus, and other Athenians of note. Conspicuous among them was Cynægeirus, the brother of the tragic poet Æschylus. He had grasped the ornamental work on the stern of one of the galleys, and had his hand struck off by an axe. Seven galleys were captured; but the Persians succeeded in saving the rest. They pushed off from the fatal shore: but even here the skill of Datis did not desert him, and he sailed round to the western coast of Attica, in hopes to find the city unprotected, and to gain possession of it from some of the partisans of Hippias. Miltiades, however, saw and counteracted his manœuvre. Leaving Aristides, and the troops of his tribe, to guard the spoil and the slain, the Athenian commander led his conquering army by a rapid night-march back across the country to Athens. And when the Persian fleet had doubled the Cape of Sunium and sailed up to the Athenian harbour in the morning, Datis

saw arrayed on the heights above the city the troops before whom his men had fled on the preceding evening. All hope of further conquest in Europe for the time was abandoned, and the baffled armada returned to the Asiatic coasts.

After the battle had been fought, but while the dead bodies were yet on the ground, the promised reinforcement from Sparta arrived. Two thousand Lacedæmonian spearmen, starting immediately after the full moon, had marched the hundred and fifty miles between Athens and Sparta in the wonderfully short time of three days. Though too late to share in the glory of the action, they requested to be allowed to march to the battle-field to behold the Medes. They proceeded thither, gazed on the dead bodies of the invaders, and then, praising the Athenians and what they had done, they returned to Lacedæmon.

The number of the Persian dead was six thousand four hundred; of the Athenians, a hundred and ninety-two. The number of Plataeans who fell is not mentioned, but as they fought in the part of the army which was not broken, it cannot have been large.

The apparent disproportion between the losses of the two armies is not surprising, when we remember the armour of the Greek spearmen, and the impossibility of heavy slaughter being inflicted by sword or lance on troops so armed, as long as they kept firm in their ranks.

The Athenian slain were buried on the field of battle. This was contrary to the usual custom, according to which the bones of all who fell fighting for their country in each year were deposited in a public sepulchre in the suburb of Athens called the Cerameicus. But it was felt that a distinction ought to be made in the funeral honours paid to the men of Marathon, even as their merit had been distinguished over that of all other Athenians. A lofty mound was raised on the plain of Marathon, beneath which the remains of the men of Athens who fell in the battle were deposited. Ten columns were erected on the spot, one for each of the Athenian tribes; and on the monumental column of each tribe were graven the

names of those of its members whose glory it was to have fallen in the great battle of liberation. The antiquary Pausanias, read those names there six hundred years after the time when they were first graven. The columns have long perished, but the mound still marks the spot where the noblest heroes of antiquity repose.

## CHAPTER II

### • DEFEAT OF THE ATHENIANS AT SYRACUSE, B.C. 413.

"The Romans knew not, and could not know, how deeply the greatness of their own posterity, and the fate of the whole Western world, were involved in the destruction of the fleet at Athens in the harbour of Syracuse. Had that great expedition proved victorious, the energies of Greece during the next eventful century would have found their field in the West no less than in the East; Greece, and not Rome, might have conquered Carthage; Greek instead of Latin might have been at this day the principal element of the language of Spain, of France, and of Italy; and the laws of Athens, rather than of Rome, might be the foundation of the law of the civilized world."—*Arnold*.

"The great expedition to Sicily, one of the most decisive events in the history of the world."—*Niebuhr*.

Few cities have undergone more memorable sieges during ancient and mediæval times, than has the city of Syracuse. Athenian, Carthaginian, Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, Saracen, and Norman, have in turns beleaguered her walls; and the resistance which she successfully opposed to some of her early assailants was of the deepest importance, not only to the fortunes of the generations then in being, but to all the subsequent current of human events. To adopt the eloquent expressions of Arnold respecting the check which she gave to the Carthaginian arms, "Syracuse was a breakwater, which God's providence raised up to protect the yet immature strength of Rome". And her triumphant repulse of the great Athenian expedition against her was of even more widespread and enduring importance. It forms a decisive epoch in the strife for universal empire, in which all the great states of antiquity successively engaged and failed.

Syracuse  
often be-  
sieged.

The present city of Syracuse is a place of little or no military strength, as the fire of artillery from the neighbouring heights would almost completely command it. But in ancient warfare its position, and the care bestowed on its walls, rendered it formidably strong against the means of offence which then were employed by besieging armies.

The ancient city, in the time of the Peloponnesian war, was chiefly built on the knob of land which projects into the sea on the eastern coast of Sicily, between two bays; one of which, to the north, was called the bay of Thapsus, while the southern one formed the great harbour of the city of Syracuse itself. A small island, or peninsula (for such it soon was rendered), lies at the south-eastern extremity of this knob of land, stretching almost entirely across the mouth of the great harbour, and rendering it nearly land-locked. This island comprised the original settlement of the first Greek colonists from Corinth, who founded Syracuse two thousand five hundred years ago; and the modern city has shrunk again into these primary limits. But, in the fifth century before our era, the growing wealth and population of the Syracusans had led them to occupy and include within their city walls portion after portion of the mainland lying next to the little isle; so that at the time of the Athenian expedition the seaward part of the land between the two bays already spoken of was built over, and fortified from bay to bay; constituting the larger part of Syracuse.

The landward wall, therefore, of the city traversed this knob of land, which continues to slope upwards from the sea, and which to the west of the old fortifications (that is, towards the interior of Sicily) rises rapidly for a mile or two, but diminishes in width, and finally terminates in a long narrow ridge, between which and Mount Hybla a succession of chasms and uneven low ground extend. On each flank of this ridge the descent is steep and precipitous from its summits to the strips of level land that lie immediately below it, both to the south-west and north-west.

A city built close to the sea, like Syracuse, was impreg-

nable, save by the combined operations of a superior hostile fleet and a superior hostile army. And Syracuse, from her size, her population, and her military and naval resources, not unnaturally thought herself secure from finding in another Greek city a foe capable of sending a sufficient armament to menace her with capture and subjection. But in the spring of 414 B.C. the Athenian navy was mistress of her harbour and the adjacent seas; an Athenian army had defeated her troops, and cooped them within the town; and from bay to bay a blockading-wall was being rapidly carried across the strips of level ground and the high ridge outside the city (then termed Epipolæ), which, if completed, would have cut the Syracusans off from all succour from the interior of Sicily, and have left them at the mercy of the Athenian generals. The besiegers' works were, indeed, unfinished; but every day the unfortified interval in their lines grew narrower, and with it diminished all apparent hope of safety for the beleaguered town.

Athens was now staking the flower of her forces, and the accumulated fruits of seventy years of glory, on one bold throw for the dominion of the Western world. As Napoleon from Mount Cœur de Lion pointed to St. Jean d'Acre, and told his staff that the capture of that town would decide his destiny, and would change the face of the world, so the Athenian officers, from the heights of Epipolæ, must have looked on Syracuse, and felt that with its fall all the known powers of the earth would fall beneath them. They must have felt also that Athens, if repulsed there, must pause for ever in her career of conquest, and sink from an imperial republic into a ruined and subservient community.

The Ægean Sea was an Attic lake. Westward of Greece, her influence, though strong, was not equally predominant. She had colonies and allies among the wealthy and populous Greek settlements in Sicily and South Italy, but she had no organized system of confederates in those regions; and her galleys brought her no tribute from the western seas. The extension of her empire over Sicily

Athenian policy at the time.

was the favourite project of her ambitious orators and generals. Pericles had made her trust to her empire of the seas. Every Athenian in those days was a practised seaman. A state indeed whose members, of an age fit for service, at no time exceeded thirty thousand, and whose territorial extent did not equal half Sussex, could only have acquired such a naval dominion as Athens once held, by devoting, and zealously training, all its sons to service in its fleets. In order to man the numerous galleys which she sent out, she necessarily employed also large numbers of hired mariners and slaves at the oar; but the staple of her crews was Athenian, and all posts of command were held by native citizens. It was by reminding them of this, of their long practice in seamanship, and the certain superiority which their discipline gave them over the enemy's marine, that their great minister mainly encouraged them to resist the combined power of Lacedæmon and her allies. He taught them that Athens might thus reap the fruit of her zealous devotion to maritime affairs ever since the invasion of the Medes; "she had not, indeed, perfected herself; but the reward of her superior training was the rule of the sea—a mighty dominion, for it gave her the rule of much fair land beyond its waves, safe from the idle ravages with which the Lacedæmonians might harass Attica, but never could subdue Athens".

The West was now the quarter towards which the thoughts of every aspiring Athenian was directed. From the very beginning of the war Athens had kept up an interest in Sicily; and her squadrons had from time to time appeared on its coasts and taken part in the dissensions in which the Sicilian Greeks were universally engaged one against the other. There were plausible grounds for a direct quarrel, and an open attack by the Athenians upon Syracuse.

With the capture of Syracuse all Sicily, it was hoped, would be secured. Carthage and Italy were next to be assailed. With large levies of Iberian mercenaries she then meant to overwhelm her Peloponnesian enemies. The Persian monarchy lay in hopeless imbecility, inviting Greek invasion;

Athens looking  
to the West.



nor did the known world contain the power that seemed capable of checking the growing might of Athens, if Syracuse once could be hers.

The armament which the Athenians equipped against Syracuse was in every way worthy of the state which formed such projects of universal empire; and it has been truly termed "the noblest that ever yet had been sent forth by a free and civilized commonwealth". The fleet consisted of one hundred and thirty-four war-galleys, with a multitude of store-ships. A powerful force of the best heavy-armed infantry that Athens and her allies could furnish was sent on board, together with a smaller number of slingers and bowmen. The quality of the forces was even more remarkable than the number. The zeal of individuals vied with that of the republic in giving every galley the best possible crew, and every troop the most perfect accoutrements. And with private as well as public wealth eagerly lavished on all that could give splendour as well as efficiency to the expedition, the fated fleet began its voyage for the Sicilian shores in the summer of 415 B.C.

The Syracusans themselves, at the time of the Peloponnesian war, were a bold and turbulent democracy, tyrannizing over the weaker Greek cities in Sicily, and trying to gain in that island the same arbitrary supremacy which Athens maintained along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. In numbers and in spirit they were fully equal to the Athenians, but far inferior to them in military and naval discipline. When the probability of an Athenian invasion was first publicly discussed at Syracuse, and efforts were made by some of the wiser citizens to improve the state of the national defences, and prepare for the impending danger, the rumours of coming war and the proposals for preparation were received by the mass of the Syracusans with scornful incredulity. The speech of one of their popular orators is preserved to us in Thucydides, and many of its topics might, by a slight alteration of names and details, serve admirably for the party among ourselves at present which opposes the augmentation

of our forces, and derides the idea of our being in any peril from the sudden attack of a French expedition. The Syracusan orator told his countrymen to dismiss with scorn the visionary terrors which a set of designing men among themselves strove to excite, in order to get power and influence thrown into their own hands. He told them that Athens knew her own interest too well to think of wantonly provoking their hostility:—*“Even if the enemies were to come,”* said he, *“so distant from their resources, and opposed to such a power as ours, their destruction would be easy and inevitable. Their ships will have enough to do to get to our island at all, and to carry such stores of all sorts as will be needed. They cannot therefore carry, besides, an army large enough to cope with such a population as ours. They will have no fortified place from which to commence their operations; but must rest them on no better base than a set of wretched tents, and such means as the necessities of the moment will allow them. But in truth I do not believe that they would even be able to effect a disembarkation. Let us, therefore, set at nought these reports as altogether of home manufacture; and be sure that if any enemy does come, the state will know how to defend itself in a manner worthy of the national honour.”*

Such assertions pleased the Syracusan assembly; and their counterparts find favour now among some portion of the English public.\* But the invaders of Syracuse came; made good their landing in Sicily; and, if they had promptly attacked the city itself, instead of wasting nearly a year in desultory operations in other parts of the island, the Syracusans must have paid the penalty of their self-sufficient carelessness in submission to the Athenian yoke. But, of the three generals who led the Athenian expedition, two only were men of ability, and one was most weak and incompetent. Fortunately for Syracuse, Alcibiades, the most skilful of the three, was soon deposed from his command by a factious and fanatic vote of his fellow-countrymen, and the other competent one, Lamachus, fell early in a skirmish: while, more fortunately still for her, the feeble and vacillating Nicias remained unrecalled and unhurt, to assume the undivided leadership of

the Athenian army and fleet, and to mar, by alternate over-caution and over-carelessness, every chance of success which the early part of the operations offered. Still, even under him, the Athenians nearly won the town. They defeated the raw levies of the Syracusans, cooped them within the walls, and, as before mentioned, almost effected a continuous fortification from bay to bay over Epipolæ, the completion of which would certainly have been followed by capitulation.

Alcibiades, the most complete example of genius without principle that history produces, the Bolingbroke of antiquity, but with high military talents superadded to diplomatic and oratorical powers, on being summoned home from his command in Sicily to take his trial before the Athenian tribunal, had escaped to Sparta; and he exerted himself there with all the selfish rancour of a renegade to renew the war with Athens, and to send instant assistance to Syracuse.

The Spartans resolved to act on his advice, and appointed Gylippus to the Sicilian command. Gylippus was a man who, to the national bravery and military skill of a Spartan, united political sagacity that was Sparta sends Gylippus to Syracuse. worthy of his great fellow-countryman Brasidas; but his merits were debased by mean and sordid vice; and his is one of the cases in which history has been austere just, and where little or no fame has been accorded to the successful but venal soldier. But for the purpose for which he was required in Sicily, an abler man could not have been found in Lacedæmon. His country gave him neither men nor money, but she gave him her authority; and the influence of her name and of his own talents was speedily seen in the zeal with which the Corinthians and other Peloponnesian Greeks began to equip a squadron to act under him for the rescue of Sicily. As soon as four galleys were ready, he hurried over with them to the southern coast of Italy; and there, though he received such evil tidings of the state of Syracuse that he abandoned all hope of saving that city, he determined to remain on the coast, and do what he could in preserving the Italian cities from the Athenians.

So nearly, indeed, had Nicias completed his beleaguering lines, and so utterly desperate had the state of Syracuse seemingly become, that an assembly of the Syracusans was actually convened, and they were discussing the terms on which they should offer to capitulate, when a galley was seen dashing into the great harbour, and making her way towards the town with all the speed that her rowers could supply. From her shunning the part of the harbour where the Athenian fleet lay, and making straight for the Syracusan side, it was clear that she was a friend; the enemy's cruisers, careless through confidence of success, made no attempt to cut her off; she touched the beach, and a Corinthian captain springing on shore from her, was eagerly conducted to the assembly of the Syracusan people, just in time to prevent the fatal vote being put for a surrender.

Providentially for Syracuse, Gongylus, the commander of the galley, had been prevented by an Athenian squadron from following Gylippus to South Italy, and he had been obliged to push direct for Syracuse from Greece.

The sight of actual succour, and the promise of more, revived the drooping spirits of the Syracusans. They felt that they were not left desolate to perish; and the tidings that a Spartan was coming to command them confirmed their resolution to continue their resistance. Gylippus was already near the city. He had learned at Locri that the first report which had reached him of the state of Syracuse was exaggerated; and that there was an unfinished space in the besiegers' lines through which it was barely possible to introduce reinforcements into the town. Crossing the straits of Messina, which the culpable negligence of Nicias had left unguarded, Gylippus landed on the northern coast of Sicily, and there began to collect from the Greek cities an army, of which the regular troops that he brought from Peloponnesus formed the nucleus. Such was the influence of the name of Sparta,<sup>1</sup> and such were his own abilities and activity, that he

<sup>1</sup> The effect of the presence of a Spartan officer on the troops of the other Greeks, seems to have been like the effect of the presence of an English officer upon native Indian troops.

succeeded in raising a force of about two thousand fully-armed infantry, with a larger number of irregular troops. Nicias, as if infatuated, made no attempt to counteract his operations; nor, when Gylippus marched his little army towards Syracuse, did the Athenian commander endeavour to check him. The Syracusans marched out to meet him: and while the Athenians were solely intent on completing their fortifications on the southern side towards the harbour, Gylippus turned their position by occupying the high ground in the extreme rear of Epipolæ. He then marched through the unfortified interval of Nicias's lines into the besieged town; and, joining his troops with the Syracusan forces, after some engagements with varying success, gained the mastery over Nicias, drove the Athenians from Epipolæ, and hemmed them into a disadvantageous position in the low grounds near the great harbour.

The attention of all Greece was now fixed on Syracuse; and every enemy of Athens felt the importance of the opportunity now offered of checking her ambition, and, perhaps, of striking a deadly blow at her power. Large reinforcements from Corinth, Thebes, and other cities now reached the Syracusans; while the baffled and dispirited Athenian general earnestly besought his countrymen to recall him, and represented the further prosecution of the siege as hopeless.

But Athens had made it a maxim never to let difficulty or disaster drive her back from any enterprise once undertaken, so long as she possessed the means of making any effort, however desperate, for its accomplishment. With indomitable pertinacity she now decreed, instead of recalling her first armament from before Syracuse, to send out a second, though her enemies near home had now renewed open warfare against her, and by occupying a permanent fortification in her territory, had severely distressed her population, and were pressing her with almost all the hardships of an actual siege. She still was mistress of the sea, and she sent forth another fleet of seventy galleys, and another army, which seemed to drain the very last reserves of her military population, to try if Syracuse could not yet be won, and the honour of the Athenian arms be

preserved from the stigma of a retreat. Hers was, indeed, a spirit that might be broken, but never would bend. At the head of this second expedition she wisely placed her best general, Demosthenes, one of the most distinguished officers whom the long Peloponnesian war had produced, and who, if he had originally held the Sicilian command, would soon have brought Syracuse to submission.

The fame of Demosthenes the general has been dimmed by the superior lustre of his great countryman, Demosthenes the orator. When the name of Demosthenes is mentioned, it is the latter alone that is thought of. The soldier has found no biographer. Yet out of the long list of the great men of the Athenian republic, there are few that deserve to stand higher than this brave, though finally unsuccessful, leader of her fleets and armies in the first half of the Peloponnesian war. There are few men named in ancient history, of whom posterity would gladly know more, or whom we sympathize with more deeply in the calamities that befell them, than Demosthenes, the son of Alcisthenes, who, in the spring of the year 413 B.C., left Piræus at the head of the second Athenian expedition against Sicily.

His arrival was critically timed; for Gylippus had encouraged the Syracusans to attack the Athenians under Nicias by sea as well as by land, and by an able stratagem of Ariston, one of the admirals of the Corinthian auxiliary squadron, the Syracusans and their confederates had inflicted on the fleet of Nicias the first defeat that the Athenian navy had ever sustained from a numerically inferior foe. Gylippus was preparing to follow up his advantage by fresh attacks on the Athenians on both elements, when the arrival of Demosthenes completely changed the aspect of affairs, and restored the superiority to the invaders. With seventy-three war-galleys in the highest state of efficiency, and brilliantly equipped, with a force of five thousand picked men of the regular infantry of Athens and her allies, and a still larger number of bowmen, javelin-men, and slingers on board, Demosthenes rowed round the great harbour with loud cheers and martial

Arrival of  
Demosthenes  
with Athenian  
reserves.

music, as if in defiance of the Syracusans and their confederates. His arrival had indeed changed their newly-born hopes into the deepest consternation. The resources of Athens seemed inexhaustible, and resistance to her hopeless. They had been told that she was reduced to the last extremities, and that her territory was occupied by an enemy; and yet, here they saw her, as if in prodigality of power, sending forth, to make foreign conquests, a second armament, not inferior to that with which Nicias had first landed on the Sicilian shores.

With the intuitive decision of a great commander, Demosthenes at once saw that the possession of Epipolæ was the key to the possession of Syracuse, and he resolved to make a prompt and vigorous attempt to recover Attack on Epipolæ fails. that position, while his force was unimpaired, and the consternation which its arrival had produced among the besieged remained unabated. The Syracusans and their allies had run out an outwork along Epipolæ from the city walls, intersecting the fortified lines of circumvallation which Nicias had commenced, but from which they had been driven by Gylippus. Could Demosthenes succeed in storming this outwork, and in re-establishing the Athenian troops on the high ground, he might fairly hope to be able to resume the circumvallation of the city, and become the conqueror of Syracuse: for, when once the besiegers' lines were completed, the number of the troops with which Gylippus had garrisoned the place would only tend to exhaust the stores of provisions, and accelerate its downfall.

An easily-repelled attack was first made on the outwork in the daytime, probably more with the view of blinding the besieged to the nature of the main operations than with any expectation of succeeding in an open assault, with every disadvantage of the ground to contend against. But, when the darkness had set in, Demosthenes formed his men in columns, each soldier taking with him five days' provisions, and the engineers and workmen of the camp following the troops with their tools, and all portable implements of fortification, so as at once to secure any advantage of ground that the army might gain. Thus equipped and prepared, he led his men along by

the foot of the southern flank of Epipolæ, in a direction towards the interior of the island, till he came immediately below the narrow ridge that forms the extremity of the high ground looking westward. He then wheeled his vanguard to the right, sent them rapidly up the paths that wind along the face of the cliff, and succeeded in completely surprising the Syracusan outposts, and in placing his troops fairly on the extreme summit of the all-important Epipolæ. Thence the Athenians marched eagerly down the slope towards the town, routing some Syracusan detachments that were quartered in their way, and vigorously assailing the unprotected part of the outwork. All at first favoured them. The outwork was abandoned by its garrison, and the Athenian engineers began to dismantle it. In vain Gylippus brought up fresh troops to check the assault: the Athenians broke and drove them back, and continued to press hotly forward, in the full confidence of victory. But, amid the general consternation of the Syracusans and their confederates, one body of infantry stood firm. This was a brigade of their Bœotian allies, which was posted low down the slope of Epipolæ, outside the city walls. Coolly and steadily the Bœotian infantry formed their line, and, undismayed by the current of flight around them, advanced against the advancing Athenians. This was the crisis of the battle. But the Athenian van was disorganized by its own previous successes; and, yielding to the unexpected charge thus made on it by troops in perfect order, and of the most obstinate courage, it was driven back in confusion upon the other divisions of the army that still continued to press forward. When once the tide was thus turned, the Syracusans passed rapidly from the extreme of panic to the extreme of vengeful daring, and with all their forces they now fiercely assailed the embarrassed and receding Athenians. In vain did the officers of the latter strive to re-form their line. Amid the din and the shouting of the fight, and the confusion inseparable upon a night engagement, especially one where many thousand combatants were pent and whirled together in a narrow and uneven area, the necessary manœuvres were impracticable; and though many



companies still fought on desperately, wherever the moonlight showed them the semblance of a foe, they fought without concert or subordination; and not unfrequently, amid the deadly chaos, Athenian troops assailed each other. Keeping their ranks close, the Syracusans and their allies pressed on against the disorganized masses of the besiegers; and at length drove them, with heavy slaughter, over the cliffs, which, scarce an hour before, they had scaled full of hope, and apparently certain of success.

This defeat was decisive of the event of the siege. The Athenians afterwards struggled only to protect themselves from the vengeance which the Syracusans sought to wreak in the complete destruction of their invaders. Never, however, was vengeance more complete and terrible. A series of sea-fights followed, in which the Athenian galleys were utterly destroyed or captured. The mariners and soldiers who escaped death in disastrous engagements, and in a vain attempt to force a retreat into the interior of the island, became prisoners of war. Nicias and Demosthenes were put to death in cold blood; and their men either perished miserably in the Syracusan dungeons, or were sold into slavery to the very persons whom, in their pride of power, they had crossed the seas to enslave.

All danger from Athens to the independent nations of the West was now for ever at an end. She, indeed, continued to struggle against her combined enemies and revolted allies with unparalleled gallantry; and many more years of varying warfare passed away before she surrendered to their arms. But no success in subsequent conquests could ever have restored her to the pre-eminence in enterprise, resources, and maritime skill which she had acquired before her fatal reverses in Sicily. Nor among the rival Greek republics, whom her own rashness aided to crush her, was there any capable of reorganizing her empire, or resuming her schemes of conquest. The dominion of Western Europe was left for Rome and Carthage to dispute two centuries later, in conflicts still more terrible, and with even higher displays of military daring and genius, than Athens had witnessed either in her rise, her meridian, or her fall.

## CHAPTER III

## THE BATTLE OF ARBELA, B.C. 331

"Alexander deserves the glory which he has enjoyed for so many centuries and among all nations; but what if he had been beaten at Arbela, having the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the deserts in his rear, without any strong places of refuge, nine hundred leagues from Macedonia?"—*Napoleon*.

A long and not uninteresting list might be made out of illustrious men, whose characters have been vindicated during recent times from aspersions which for centuries Great men often depreciated. had been thrown on them. The spirit of modern enquiry, and the tendency of modern scholarship, both of which are often said to be solely negative and destructive, have, in truth, restored to splendour, and almost created anew, far more than they have assailed with censure, or dismissed from consideration as unreal. The truth of many a brilliant narrative of brilliant exploits has of late years been triumphantly demonstrated; and the shallowness of the sceptical scoffs with which little minds have carped at the great minds of antiquity, has been in many instances decisively exposed. The laws, the politics, and the lines of action adopted or recommended by eminent men and powerful nations have been examined with keener investigation, and considered with more comprehensive judgment, than formerly were brought to bear on these subjects. The result has been at least as often favourable as unfavourable to the persons and the states so scrutinized; and many an oft-repeated slander against both measures and men has thus been silenced, we may hope, for ever.

The name of the victor of Arbela has led to these reflections; for, although the rapidity and extent of Alexander's conquests have through all ages challenged admiration and amazement, the grandeur of genius which he displayed in his schemes of commerce, civilization, and of comprehensive union and unity amongst nations, has, until lately, been comparatively unhonoured. This long-continued depreciation was of

early date. The ancient rhetoricians—a class of babblers, a school for lies and scandal, as Niebuhr justly termed them—chose among the stock themes for their commonplaces, the character and exploits of Alexander. They had their followers in every age; and until a very recent period, all who wished to “point a moral or adorn a tale” about unreasoning ambition, extravagant pride, and the formidable frenzies of free will when leagued with free power, have never failed to blazon forth the so-called madman of Macedonia as one of the most glaring examples. Without doubt, many of these writers adopted with implicit credence traditional ideas, and supposed, with unenquiring philanthropy, that in blackening Alexander they were doing humanity good service. But also, without doubt, many of his assailants, like those of other great men, have been mainly instigated by “that strongest of all antipathies, the antipathy of a second-rate mind to a first-rate one”, and by the envy which talent too often bears to genius.

Arrian, who wrote his history of Alexander when Hadrian was emperor of the Roman world, and when the spirit of declamation and dogmatism was at its full height, but who was himself, unlike the dreaming pedants of the schools, a statesman and a soldier of practical and proved ability, well rebuked the malevolent aspersions which he heard continually thrown upon the memory of the great conqueror of the East. He truly says, “Let the man who speaks evil of Alexander not merely bring forward those passages of Alexander’s life which were really evil, but let him collect and review *all* the actions of Alexander, and then let him thoroughly consider first who and what manner of man he himself is, and what has been his own career; and then let him consider who and what manner of man Alexander was, and to what an eminence of human grandeur *he* arrived. Let him consider that Alexander was a king, and the undisputed lord of the two continents; and that his name is renowned throughout the whole earth. Let the evil-speaker against Alexander bear all this in mind, and then let him

Views on  
Alexander  
(1) of Arrian.

reflect on his own insignificance, the pettiness of his own circumstances and affairs, and the blunders that he makes about these, paltry and trifling as they are. Let him then ask himself whether he is a fit person to censure and revile such a man as Alexander. I believe that there was in his time no nation of men, no city, nay, no single individual, with whom Alexander's name had not become a familiar word. I therefore hold that such a man, who was like no ordinary mortal, was not born into the world without some special providence."

And one of the most distinguished soldiers and writers of our own nation, Sir Walter Raleigh, though he failed to estimate justly the full merits of Alexander, has expressed his sense of the grandeur of the part played in the world by "The Great Emathian Conqueror" in language that well deserves quotation:—

"So much hath the spirit of some one man excelled as it hath undertaken and effected the alteration of the greatest states and commonweals, the erection of monarchies, the conquest of kingdoms and empires, guided handfuls of men against multitudes of equal bodily strength, contrived victories beyond all hope and discourse of reason, converted the fearful passions of his own followers into magnanimity, and the valour of his enemies into cowardice; such spirits have been stirred up in sundry ages of the world, and in divers parts thereof, to erect and cast down again, to establish and to destroy, and to bring all things, persons, and states to the same certain ends, which the infinite spirit of the *Universal*, piercing, moving, and governing all things, hath ordained. Certainly, the things that this king did were marvellous, and would hardly have been undertaken by anyone else: and though his father had determined to have invaded the Lesser Asia, it is like that he would have contented himself with some part thereof, and not have discovered the river of Indus, as this man did."

A higher authority than either Arrian or Raleigh may now be referred to by those who wish to know the real merit of Alexander as a general, and how far the commonplace assertions are true, that his successes were the mere results

of fortunate rashness and unreasoning pugnacity. Napoleon selected Alexander as one of the seven greatest generals whose noble deeds history has handed down to us, and from the study of whose campaigns <sup>(3) of Napoleon.</sup> the principles of war are to be learned. The critique of the greatest conqueror of modern times on the military career of the great conqueror of the old world, is no less graphic than true.

"Alexander crossed the Dardanelles 334 B.C., with an army of about forty thousand men, of which one-eighth was cavalry; he forced the passage of the Granicus in opposition to an army under Memnon, the Greek, who commanded for Darius on the coast of Asia, and he spent the whole of the year 333 in establishing his power in Asia Minor. He was seconded by the Greek colonists, who dwelt on the borders of the Black Sea, and on the Mediterranean, and in Smyrna, Ephesus, Tarsus, Miletus, &c. The kings of Persia left their provinces and towns to be governed according to their own particular laws. Their empire was a union of confederated states, and did not form one nation; this facilitated its conquest. As Alexander only wished for the throne of the monarch, he easily effected the change, by respecting the customs, manners, and laws of the people, who experienced no change in their condition.

"In the year 332, he met with Darius at the head of sixty thousand men, who had taken up a position near Tarsus, on the banks of the Issus, in the province of Cilicia. He defeated him, entered Syria, took Damascus, which contained all the riches of the Great King, and laid siege to Tyre. This superb metropolis of the commerce of the world detained him nine months. He took Gaza after a siege of two months; crossed the Desert in seven days; entered Pelusium and Memphis, and founded Alexandria. In less than two years, after two battles and four or five sieges, the coasts of the Black Sea from Phasis to Byzantium, those of the Mediterranean as far as Alexandria, all Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, had submitted to his arms.

"In 331, he repassed the Desert, encamped in Tyre, re-crossed Syria, entered Damascus, passed the Euphrates and Tigris, and defeated Darius on the field of Arbela, when he was at the head of a still stronger army than that which he commanded on the Issus, and Babylon opened her gates to him. In 330, he overran Susa, and took that city, Persepolis, and Pasargada, which contained the tomb of Cyrus. In 329, he directed his course northward, entered Ecbatana, and extended his conquests to the coasts of the Caspian, punished Bessus, the cowardly assassin of Darius, penetrated into Scythia, and subdued the Scythians. In 328, he forced the passage of the Oxus, received sixteen thousand recruits from Macedonia, and reduced the neighbouring people to subjection. In 327, he crossed the Indus, vanquished Porus in a pitched battle, took him prisoner, and treated him as a king. He contemplated passing the Ganges, but his army refused. He sailed down the Indus, in the year 326, with eight hundred vessels; having arrived at the ocean, he sent Nearchus with a fleet to run along the coasts of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, as far as the mouth of the Euphrates. In 325, he took sixty days in crossing from Gedrosia, entered Keramania, returned to Pasargada, Persepolis, and Susa, and married Statira, the daughter of Darius. In 324, he marched once more to the north, passed Ecbatana, and terminated his career at Babylon."

The enduring importance of Alexander's conquests is to be estimated not by the duration of his own life and empire, or even by the duration of the kingdoms which his generals after his death formed out of the fragments of that mighty dominion. In every region of the world that he traversed, Alexander planted Greek settlements, and founded cities, in the populations of which the Greek element at once asserted its predominance. Among his successors, the Seleucidæ and the Ptolemies imitated their great captain in blending schemes of civilization, of commercial intercourse, and of literary and scientific research with all their enterprises of military aggrandizement, and with all

Alexander's work  
permanent.

their systems of civil administration. Such was the ascendancy of the Greek genius, so wonderfully comprehensive and assimilating was the cultivation which it introduced, that, within thirty years after Alexander crossed the Hellespont, the language, the literature, and the arts of Hellas, enforced and promoted by the arms of semi-Hellenic Macedon, predominated in every country from the shores of that sea to the Indian waters. Even sullen Egypt acknowledged the intellectual supremacy of Greece; and the language of Pericles and Plato became the language of the statesmen and the sages who dwelt in the mysterious land of the Pyramids and the Sphinx. It is not to be supposed that this victory of the Greek tongue was so complete as to exterminate the Coptic, the Syrian, the Armenian, the Persian, or the other native languages of the numerous nations and tribes between the *Ægean*, the *Iaxertes*, the *Indus*, and the *Nile*; they survived as provincial dialects. Each probably was in use as the vulgar tongue of its own district. But every person with the slightest pretence to education spoke Greek. Greek was universally the state language, and the exclusive language of all literature and science. It formed also for the merchant, the trader, and the traveller, as well as for the courtier, the government official, and the soldier, the organ of intercommunication among the myriads of mankind inhabiting these large portions of the Old World. Throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, the Hellenic character that was thus imparted, remained in full vigour down to the time of the Mahometan conquests. The infinite value of this to humanity in the highest and holiest point of view has often been pointed out; and the workings of the finger of Providence have been gratefully recognized by those who have observed how the early growth and progress of Christianity were aided by that diffusion of the Greek language and civilization throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt which had been caused by the Macedonian conquest of the East.

In Upper Asia, beyond the Euphrates, the direct and material influence of Greek ascendancy was more short-lived.

Yet, during the existence of the Hellenic kingdoms in these regions, especially of the Greek kingdom of Bactria, the modern Bokhara, very important effects were produced on the intellectual tendencies and tastes of the inhabitants of those countries and of the adjacent ones, by the animating contact of the Grecian spirit. Much of Hindoo science and philosophy, much of the literature of the later Persian kingdom of the Arsacidæ, either originated from, or was largely modified by, Grecian influences. So, also, the learning and science of the Arabians were in a far less degree the result of original invention and genius, than the reproduction, in an altered form, of the Greek philosophy and the Greek lore, acquired by the Saracenic conquerors together with their acquisition of the provinces which Alexander had subjugated nearly a thousand years before the armed disciples of Mahomet commenced their career in the East. It is well known that Western Europe in the Middle Ages drew its philosophy, its arts, and its science principally from Arabian teachers. And thus we see how the intellectual influence of ancient Greece, poured on the Eastern world by Alexander's victories, and then brought back to bear on Mediæval Europe by the spread of the Saracenic powers, has exerted its action on the elements of modern civilization by this powerful, though indirect channel, as well as by the more obvious effects of the remnants of classic civilization which survived in Italy, Gaul, Britain, and Spain, after the irruption of the Germanic nations.

These considerations invest the Macedonian triumphs in the East with never-dying interest, such as the most shadowy and sanguinary successes of mere "low ambition and the pride of kings", however they may dazzle for a moment, can never retain with posterity. Whether the old Persian empire, which Cyrus founded, could have survived much longer than it did, even if Darius had been victorious at Arbela, may safely be disputed. That ancient dominion, like the Turkish at the present time, laboured under every cause of decay and dissolution. The satraps, like the modern pashas,

Persian Empire  
tottering.



continually rebelled against the central power, and Egypt, in particular, was almost always in a state of insurrection against its nominal sovereign. There was no longer any effective central control, or any internal principle of unity fused through the huge mass of the empire, and binding it together. Persia was evidently about to fall; but, had it not been for Alexander's invasion of Asia, she would most probably have fallen beneath some other Oriental power, as Media and Babylon had formerly fallen before herself, and as, in after times, the Parthian supremacy gave way to the revived ascendancy of Persia in the East, under the sceptres of the Arsacidæ. A revolution that merely substituted one Eastern power for another would have been utterly barren and unprofitable to mankind.

Alexander's victory at Arbela not only overthrew an Oriental dynasty, but established European rulers in its stead. It broke the monotony of the Eastern world by the impression of Western energy and superior civilization; even as England's present mission is to break up the mental and moral stagnation of India and Cathay, by pouring upon and through them the impulsive current of Anglo-Saxon commerce and conquest.

Arbela, the city which has furnished its name to the decisive battle that gave Asia to Alexander, lies more than twenty miles from the actual scene of conflict. The little village then named Gaugamela is close to the spot where the armies met, but has ceded the honour of naming the battle to its more euphonious neighbour. Gaugamela is situate in one of the wide plains that lie between the Tigris and the mountains of Kurdistan. A few undulating hillocks diversify the surface of this sandy track; but the ground is generally level, and admirably qualified for the evolutions of cavalry, and also calculated to give the larger of two armies the full advantage of numerical superiority. The Persian king (who, before he came to the throne, had proved his personal valour as a soldier, and his skill as a general) had wisely selected this region for the third and decisive encounter between his forces and the invaders. The previous defeats of his troops, however severe they had been, were not looked on as irreparable. The Granicus

had been fought by his generals rashly and without mutual concert. And, though Darius himself had commanded and been beaten at Issus, that defeat might be attributed to the disadvantageous nature of the ground; where, cooped up between the mountains, the river, and the sea, the numbers of the Persians confused and clogged alike the general's skill and the soldiers' prowess, so that their very strength became their weakness. Here, on the broad plains of Kurdistan, there was scope for Asia's largest host to array its lines, to wheel, to skirmish, to condense or expand its squadrons, to manoeuvre, and to charge at will. Should Alexander and his scanty band dare to plunge into that living sea of war, their destruction seemed inevitable.

Darius felt, however, the critical nature to himself as well as to his adversary of the coming encounter. He could not hope to retrieve the consequences of a third overthrow. The great cities of Mesopotamia and Upper Asia, the central provinces of the Persian empire, were certain to be at the mercy of the victor. Darius knew also the Asiatic character well enough to be aware how it yields to the prestige of success, and the apparent career of destiny. He felt that the diadem was now either to be firmly replaced on his own brow, or to be irrevocably transferred to the head of his European conqueror. He, therefore, during the long interval left him after the battle of Issus, while Alexander was subjugating Syria and Egypt, assiduously busied himself in selecting the best troops which his vast empire supplied, and in training his varied forces to act together with some uniformity of discipline and system.

The hardy mountaineers of Afghanistan, Bokhara, Khiva, and Thibet were then, as at present, far different from the generality of Asiatics in warlike spirit and endurance. From these districts Darius collected large bodies of admirable infantry; and the countries of the modern Kurds and Turkomans supplied, as they do now, squadrons of horsemen, strong, skilful, bold, and trained to a life of constant activity and warfare. It is not uninteresting to notice that the ancestors

of our own late enemies, the Sikhs, served as allies of Darius against the Macedonians. They are spoken of in Arrian as Indians who dwelt near Bactria. They were attached to the troops of that satrapy, and their cavalry was one of the most formidable forces in the whole Persian army.

Besides these picked troops, contingents also came in from the numerous other provinces that yet obeyed the Great King. Altogether, the horse are said to have been forty thousand, the scythe-bearing chariots two hundred, and the armed elephants fifteen in number. The amount of infantry is uncertain; but the knowledge which both ancient and modern times supply of the usual character of Oriental armies, and of their populations of camp-followers, may warrant us in believing that many myriads were prepared to fight, or to encumber those who fought, for the last Darius.

His great antagonist came on across the Euphrates against him, at the head of an army which Arrian, copying from the journals of Macedonian officers, states to have consisted of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse. In studying the campaigns of Alexander,

Alexander  
comes on with  
47,000 men.

we possess the peculiar advantage of deriving our information from two of Alexander's generals of division, who bore an important part in all his enterprises. Aristobulus and Ptolemy (who afterwards became king of Egypt) kept regular journals of the military events which they witnessed; and these journals were in the possession of Arrian, when he drew up his history of Alexander's expedition. The high character of Arrian for integrity makes us confident that he used them fairly, and his comments on the occasional discrepancies between the two Macedonian narratives prove that he used them sensibly. He frequently quotes the very words of his authorities: and his history thus acquires a charm such as very few ancient or modern military narratives possess. The anecdotes and expressions which he records we fairly believe to be genuine, and not to be the coinage of a rhetorician, like those in Curtius. In fact, in reading Arrian, we read General Aristobulus and General Ptolemy on the campaigns of the Macedonians; and it

is like reading General Jomini or General Foy on the campaigns of the French.

The estimates which we find in Arrian of the strength of Alexander's army, seems reasonable when we take into account both the losses which he had sustained, and the reinforcements which he had received since he left Europe. Indeed, to Englishmen, who know with what mere handfuls of men our own generals have, at Plassy, at Assaye, at Meeanee, and other Indian battles, routed large hosts of Asiatics, the disparity of numbers that we read of in the victories won by the Macedonians over the Persians presents nothing incredible. The army which Alexander now led, was wholly composed of veteran troops in the highest possible state of equipment and discipline, enthusiastically devoted to their leader, and full of confidence in his military genius and his victorious destiny.

The celebrated Macedonian phalanx formed the main strength of his infantry. This force had been raised and organized by his father Philip, who on his accession to the Macedonian throne needed a numerous and quickly-formed army, and who, by lengthening the spear of the ordinary Greek phalanx, and increasing the depth of the files, brought the tactic of armed masses to the greatest efficiency of which it was capable with such materials as he possessed. He formed his men sixteen deep, and placed in their grasp the *sarissa*, as the Macedonian pike was called, which was four-and-twenty feet in length, and when couched for action, reached eighteen feet in front of the soldier: so that, as a space of about two feet was allowed between the ranks, the spears of the five files behind him projected in advance of each front-rank man. The phalangite soldier was fully equipped in the defensive armour of the regular Greek infantry. And thus the phalanx presented a ponderous and bristling mass, which, as long as its order was kept compact, was sure to bear down all opposition. The defects of such an organization are obvious, and were proved in after years, when the Macedonians were opposed to the Roman legions. But it is clear that, under Alexander, the phalanx was not the cumbrous unwieldy

The "phalanx"  
in war.

body which it was at Cynoscephalæ and Pydna. His men were veterans; and he could obtain from them an accuracy of movement and steadiness of evolution, such as probably the recruits of his father would only have floundered in attempting, and such as certainly were impracticable in the phalanx when handled by his successors: especially as under them it ceased to be a standing force, and became only a militia. Under Alexander the phalanx consisted of an aggregate of eighteen thousand men, who were divided into six brigades of three thousand each. These were again subdivided into regiments and companies; and the men were carefully trained to wheel, to face about, to take more ground, or to close up, as the emergencies of the battle required. Alexander also arrayed, in the intervals of the regiments of his phalangites, troops armed in a different manner, which could prevent their line from being pierced, and their companies taken in flank, when the nature of the ground prevented a close formation; and which could be withdrawn, when a favourable opportunity arrived for closing up the phalanx or any of its brigades for a charge, or when it was necessary to prepare to receive cavalry.

Besides the phalanx, Alexander had a considerable force of infantry who were called shield-bearers: they were not so heavily armed as the phalangites, or as was the case with the Greek regular infantry in general; but they were equipped for close fight, as well as for skirmishing, and were far superior to the ordinary irregular troops of Greek warfare. They were about six thousand strong. Besides these, he had several bodies of Greek regular infantry; and he had archers, slingers, and javelin-men, who fought also with broadsword and target. These were principally supplied to him by the highlanders of Illyria and Thracia. The main strength of his cavalry consisted in two chosen corps of cuirassiers, one Macedonian and one Thessalian, each of which was about fifteen hundred strong. They were provided with long lances and heavy swords, and horse as well as man was fully equipped with defensive armour. Other regiments of regular cavalry were less heavily armed,

and there were several bodies of light horsemen, whom Alexander's conquests in Egypt and Syria had enabled him to mount superbly.

A little before the end of August, Alexander crossed the Euphrates at Thapsacus, a small corps of Persian cavalry under Mazæus retiring before him. Alexander was too prudent to march down through the Mesopotamian deserts, and continued to advance eastward with the intention of passing the Tigris, and then, if he was unable to find Darius and bring him to action, of marching southward on the left side of that river along the skirts of a mountainous district, where his men would suffer less from heat and thirst, and where provisions would be more abundant.

Darius, finding that his adversary was not to be enticed into the march through Mesopotamia against his capital, determined Darius chooses his ground. to remain on the battle-ground which he had chosen on the left of the Tigris; where, if his enemy met a defeat or a check, the destruction of the invaders would be certain with two such rivers as the Euphrates and the Tigris in their rear. The Persian king availed himself to the utmost of every advantage in his power. He caused a large space of ground to be carefully levelled for the operation of his scythe-armed chariots; and he deposited his military stores in the strong town of Arbela, about twenty miles in his rear. The rhetoricians of after ages have loved to describe Darius Codomannus as a second Xerxes in ostentation and imbecility; but a fair examination of his generalship in this his last campaign, shows that he was worthy of bearing the same name as his great predecessor, the royal son of Hystaspes.

On learning that Darius was with a large army on the left of the Tigris, Alexander hurried forward and crossed that river without opposition. He was at first unable to procure any certain intelligence of the precise position of the enemy, and after giving his army a short interval of rest, he marched for four days down the left bank of the river. A moralist may pause upon the fact, that Alexander must in this march have passed within a few miles of the remains of Nineveh, the great

city of the primæval conquerors of the human race. Neither the Macedonian king nor any of his followers knew what those vast mounds had once been. They had already become nameless masses of grass-grown ruins; and it is only within comparatively recent times that the intellectual energy of one of our own countrymen has rescued Nineveh from its long centuries of oblivion.

On the fourth day of Alexander's southward march, his advanced guard reported that a body of the enemy's cavalry was in sight. He instantly formed his army in order for battle, and directing them to advance steadily, he rode forward at the head of some squadrons of cavalry, and charged the Persian horse whom he found before him. This was a mere reconnoitring party, and they broke and fled immediately; but the Macedonians made some prisoners, and from them Alexander found that Darius was posted only a few miles off, and learned the strength of the army that he had with him. On receiving this news, Alexander halted, and gave his men repose for four days, so that they should go into action fresh and vigorous. He also fortified his camp, and deposited in it all his military stores, and all his sick and disabled soldiers; intending to advance upon the enemy with the serviceable part of his army perfectly unencumbered. After this halt, he moved forward, while it was yet dark, with the intention of reaching the enemy, and attacking them at break of day. About half-way between the camps there were some undulations of the ground, which concealed the two armies from each other's view. But, on Alexander arriving at their summit, he saw by the early light the Persian host arrayed before him; and he probably also observed traces of some engineering operation having been carried on along part of the ground in front of them. Not knowing that these marks had been caused by the Persians having levelled the ground for the free use of their war-chariots, Alexander suspected that hidden pitfalls had been prepared with a view of disordering the approach of his cavalry. He summoned a council of war forthwith. Some of the officers were for attacking instantly at all hazards, but the

more prudent opinion of Parmenio prevailed, and it was determined not to advance farther till the battle-ground had been carefully surveyed.

Alexander halted his army on the heights; and taking with him some light-armed infantry and some<sup>d</sup> cavalry, he passed part of the day in reconnoitring the enemy and observing the nature of the ground which he had to fight on. Darius wisely refrained from moving from his position to attack the Macedonians on the eminences which they occupied, and the two armies remained until night without molesting each other. On Alexander's return to his head-quarters, he summoned his generals and superior officers together, and telling them that he well knew that *their* zeal wanted no exhortation, he besought them to do their utmost in encouraging and instructing those whom each commanded, to do their best in the next day's battle. They were to remind them that they were now not going to fight for a province, as they had hitherto fought, but they were about to decide by their swords the dominion of all Asia. Each officer ought to impress this upon his subalterns, and they should urge it on their men. Their natural courage required no long words to excite its ardour: but they should be reminded of the paramount importance of steadiness in action. The silence in the ranks must be unbroken as long as silence was proper; but when the time came for the charge, the shout and the cheer must be full of terror for the foe. The officers were to be alert in receiving and communicating orders; and every one was to act as if he felt that the whole result of the battle depended on his own single good conduct.

Having thus briefly instructed his generals, Alexander ordered that the army should sup, and take their rest for the night.

Darkness had closed over the tents of the Macedonians, when Alexander's veteran general, Parmenio, came to him and proposed that they should make a night attack on the Persians. The King is said to have answered, that he scorned to filch a victory, and that Alexander must conquer openly and fairly. Arrian justly remarks that

Should there be  
a night attack?



Alexander's resolution was as wise as it was spirited. Besides the confusion and uncertainty which are inseparable from night engagements, the value of Alexander's victory would have been impaired, if gained under circumstances which might supply the enemy with any excuse for his defeat, and encourage him to renew the contest. It was necessary for Alexander not only to beat Darius, but to gain such a victory as should leave his rival without apology for defeat, and without hope of recovery.

The Persians, in fact, expected, and were prepared to meet a night attack. Such was the apprehension that Darius entertained of it, that he formed his troops at evening in order of battle, and kept them under arms all night. The effect of this was, that the morning found them jaded and dispirited, while it brought their adversaries all fresh and vigorous against them.

There was deep need of skill, as well as of valour, on Alexander's side; and few battle-fields have witnessed more consummate generalship than was now displayed by the Macedonian king. There were no natural barriers by which he could protect his flanks; and not only was he certain to be overlapped on either wing by the vast lines of the Persian army, but there was imminent risk of their circling round him and charging him in the rear, while he advanced against their centre. He formed, therefore, a second or reserve line, which was to wheel round, if required, or to detach troops to either flank, as the enemy's movements might necessitate: and thus, with their whole army ready at any moment to be thrown into one vast hollow square, the Macedonians advanced in two lines against the enemy, Alexander himself leading on the right wing, and the renowned phalanx forming the centre, while Parmenio commanded on the left.

Conspicuous by the brilliancy of his armour, and by the chosen band of officers who were round his person, Alexander took his own station, as his custom was, in the right wing, at the head of his cavalry: and when all the arrangements for the battle were complete,

Alexander leads  
the cavalry.

and his generals were fully instructed how to act in each probable emergency, he began to lead his men towards the enemy.

It was ever his custom to expose his life freely in battle, and to emulate the personal prowess of his great ancestor, Achilles. Perhaps in the bold enterprise of conquering Persia, it was politic for Alexander to raise his army's daring to the utmost by the example of his own heroic valour: and, in his subsequent campaigns, the love of the excitement, of "the rapture of the strife", may have made him, like Murat, continue from choice a custom which he commenced from duty. But he never suffered the ardour of the soldier to make him lose the coolness of the general.

Great reliance had been placed by the Persian king on the effects of the scythe-bearing chariots. It was designed to launch these against the Macedonian phalanx, and to follow them up by a heavy charge of cavalry, which it was hoped would find the ranks of the spearmen disordered by the rush of the chariots, and easily destroy this most formidable part of Alexander's force. In front, therefore, of the Persian centre, where Darius took his station, and which it was supposed the phalanx would attack, the ground had been carefully levelled and smoothed, so as to allow the chariots to charge over it with their full sweep and speed. As the Macedonian army approached the Persian, Alexander found that the front of his whole line barely equalled the front of the Persian centre, so that he was outflanked on his right by the entire left wing of the enemy, and by their entire right wing on his left. His tactics were to assail some one point of the hostile army, and gain a decisive advantage; while he refused, as far as possible, the encounter along the rest of the line. He therefore inclined his order of march to the right, so as to enable his right wing and centre to come into collision with the enemy on as favourable terms as possible though the manœuvre might in some respects compromise his left.

The effect of this oblique movement was to bring the phalanx and his own wing nearly beyond the limits of the ground

which the Persians had prepared for the operations of the chariots; and Darius, fearing to lose the benefit of this arm against the most important parts of the Macedonian force, ordered the Scythian and Bactrian cavalry, who were drawn up on his extreme left, to charge round upon Alexander's right wing, and check its further lateral progress. Against these assailants Alexander sent from his second line Menidas's cavalry. As these proved too few to make head against the enemy, he ordered Ariston also from the second line with his light horse, and Cleander with his foot, in support of Menidas. The Bactrians and Scythians now began to give way, but Darius reinforced them by the mass of Bactrian cavalry from his main line, and an obstinate cavalry fight now took place. The Bactrians and Scythians were numerous, and were better armed than the horsemen under Menidas and Ariston; and the loss at first was heaviest on the Macedonian side. But still the European cavalry stood the charge of the Asiatics, and at last, by their superior discipline, and by acting in squadrons that supported each other, instead of fighting in a confused mass like the barbarians, the Macedonians broke their adversaries, and drove them off the field.

Darius now directed the scythe-armed chariots to be driven against Alexander's horse-guards and the phalanx; and these formidable vehicles were accordingly sent rat-  
tling across the plain, against the Macedonian Persian scythed  
chariots charge.  
line. When we remember the alarm which the war-chariots of the Britons created among Cæsar's legions, we shall not be prone to deride this arm of ancient warfare as always useless. The object of the chariots was to create unsteadiness in the ranks against which they were driven, and squadrons of cavalry followed close upon them, to profit by such disorder. But the Asiatic chariots were rendered ineffective at Arbela by the light-armed troops whom Alexander had specially appointed for the service, and who, wounding the horses and drivers with their missile weapons, and running alongside so as to cut the traces or seize the reins, marred the intended charge; and the few chariots that reached the phalanx passed harmlessly

through the intervals which the spearmen opened for them, and were easily captured in the rear.

A mass of the Asiatic cavalry was now, for the second time, collected against Alexander's extreme right, and moved round it, with the view of gaining the flank of his army. At the critical moment, Aretes, with his horsemen from Alexander's second line, dashed on the Persian squadrons when their own flanks were exposed by this evolution. While Alexander thus met and baffled all the flanking attacks of the enemy with troops brought up from his second line, he kept his own horse-guards and the rest of the front line of his wing fresh, and ready to take advantage of the first opportunity for striking a decisive blow. This soon came. A large body of horse, who were posted on the Persian left wing nearest to the centre, quitted their station, and rode off to help their comrades in the cavalry fight that still was going on at the extreme right of Alexander's wing against the detachments from his second line. This made a huge gap in the Persian array, and into this space Alexander instantly dashed with his guard; and then pressing towards his left, he soon began to make havoc in the left flank of the Persian centre. The shield-bearing infantry now charged also among the reeling masses of the Asiatics; and five of the brigades of the phalanx, with the irresistible might of their sarissas, bore down the Greek mercenaries of Darius, and dug their way through the Persian centre. In the early part of the battle, Darius had shown skill and energy; and he now for some time encouraged his men, by voice and example, to keep firm. But the lances of Alexander's cavalry, and the pikes of the phalanx now gleamed nearer and nearer to him. His charioteer was struck down by a javelin at his side; and at last Darius's nerve failed him; and, descending from his chariot, he mounted on a fleet horse and galloped from the plain, regardless of the state of the battle in other parts of the field, where matters were going on much more favourably for his cause, and where his presence might have done much towards gaining a victory.

Alexander's operations with his right and centre had ex-

posed his left to an immensely preponderating force of the enemy. Parmenio kept out of action as long as possible; but Mazæus, who commanded the Persian right wing, advanced against him, completely outflanked him, and pressed him severely with reiterated charges by superior numbers. Seeing the distress of Parmenio's wing, Simmias, who commanded the sixth brigade of the phalanx, which was next to the left wing, did not advance with the other brigades in the great charge upon the Persian centre, but kept back to cover Parmenio's troops on *their* right flank; as otherwise they would have been completely surrounded and cut off from the rest of the Macedonian army. By so doing, Simmias had unavoidably opened a gap in the Macedonian left centre; and a large column of Indian and Persian horse, from the Persian right centre, had galloped forward through this interval, and right through the troops of the Macedonian second line. Instead of then wheeling round upon Parmenio, or upon the rear of Alexander's conquering wing, the Indian and Persian cavalry rode straight on to the Macedonian camp, overpowered the Thracians who were left in charge of it, and began to plunder. This was stopped by the phalangite troops of the second line, who, after the enemy's horsemen had rushed by them, faced about, countermarched upon the camp, killed many of the Indians and Persians in the act of plundering, and forced the rest to ride off again. Just at this crisis, Alexander had been recalled from his pursuit of Darius, by tidings of the distress of Parmenio, and of his inability to bear up any longer against the hot attacks of Mazæus. Taking his horse-guards with him, Alexander rode towards the part of the field where his left wing was fighting; but on his way thither he encountered the Persian and Indian cavalry, on their return from his camp.

These men now saw that their only chance of safety was to cut their way through; and in one huge column they charged desperately upon the Macedonians. There was here a close hand-to-hand fight, which lasted some time, and sixty of the royal horse-guards fell, and three generals, who fought close to Alexander's side, were wounded. At length the Macedonian

discipline and valour again prevailed, and a large number of the Persian and Indian horsemen were cut down; some few only succeeded in breaking through and riding away. Relieved of these obstinate enemies, Alexander again formed his horseguards, and led them towards Parmenîq; but by this time that general also was victorious. Probably the news of Darius's flight had reached Mazæus, and had damped the ardour of the Persian right wing; while the tidings of their comrades' success must have proportionally encouraged the Macedonian forces under Parmenio. His Thessalian cavalry particularly distinguished themselves by their gallantry and persevering good conduct; and by the time that Alexander had ridden up to Parmenio, the whole Persian army was all in full flight from the field.

It was of the deepest importance to Alexander to secure the person of Darius, and he now urged on the pursuit. The river Lycus was between the field of battle and the city of Arbela, whither the fugitives directed their course, and the passage of this river was even more destructive to the Persians than the swords and spears of the Macedonians had been in the engagement. The narrow bridge was soon choked up by the flying thousands who rushed towards it, and vast numbers of the Persians threw themselves, or were hurried by others, into the rapid stream, and perished in its waters. Darius had crossed it, and had ridden on through Arbela without halting. Alexander reached that city on the next day, and made himself master of all Darius's treasure and stores; but the Persian king, unfortunately for himself, had fled too fast for his conqueror: he had only escaped to perish by the treachery of his Bactrian satrap, Bessus.

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## CHAPTER IV

## THE BATTLE OF THE METAURUS, B.C. 207

"... The consul Nero, who made the unequalled march which deceived Hannibal, and defeated Hasdrubal, thereby accomplishing an achievement almost unrivalled in military annals. To this victory of Nero's it might be owing that his imperial name-sake reigned at all. But the infamy of the one has eclipsed the glory of the other. When the name of Nero is heard, who thinks of the consul? But such are human things."—*Byron*.

About midway between Rimini and Ancona a little river falls into the Adriatic. That stream is still called the Metauro; and wakens by its name recollections of the resolute The river Metaurus. daring of ancient Rome, and of the slaughter that stained its current over two thousand years ago, when the combined consular armies of Livius and Nero encountered and crushed near its banks the varied hosts which Hannibal's brother was leading from the Pyrenees, the Rhone, the Alps, and the Po, to aid the great Carthaginian in his stern struggle to annihilate the growing might of the Roman Republic, and make the Punic power supreme over all the nations of the world.

It was in the spring of 207 B.C. that Hasdrubal, after skillfully disentangling himself from the Roman forces in Spain, and, after a march conducted with great judgment and little loss, through the interior of Gaul and the passes of the Alps, appeared in the country that now is the north of Lombardy, at the head of troops which he had partly brought out of Spain, and partly levied among the Gauls and Ligurians on his way. At this time Hasdrubal escapes from Spain. Hannibal, with his unconquered, and seemingly unconquerable army, had been eleven years in Italy, executing with strenuous ferocity the vow of hatred to Rome which had been sworn by him while yet a child at the bidding of his father, Hamilcar; who, as he boasted, had trained up his three sons, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, and Mago, like three lion's whelps, to prey upon the Romans. But Hannibal's latter campaigns had not been signalized by any such great victories as marked the first years

of his invasion of Italy. The stern spirit of Roman resolution, ever highest in disaster and danger, had neither bent nor despaired beneath the merciless blows which "the dire African" dealt her in rapid succession at Trebia, at Thrasymene, and at Cannæ. Her population was thinned by repeated slaughter in the field; poverty and actual scarcity wore down the survivors, through the fearful ravages which Hannibal's cavalry spread through their corn-fields, their pasture-lands, and their vineyards; many of her allies went over to the invader's side; and new clouds of foreign war threatened her from Macedonia and Gaul. But Rome receded not. Rich and poor among her citizens vied with each other in devotion to their country. The wealthy placed their stores, and all placed their lives at the state's disposal. And though Hannibal could not be driven out of Italy, though every year brought its sufferings and sacrifices, Rome felt that her constancy had not been exerted in vain. If she was weakened by the continual strife, so was Hannibal also; and it was clear that the unaided resources of his army were unequal to the task of her destruction. The single deer-hound could not pull down the quarry which he had so furiously assailed. Rome not only stood fiercely at bay, but had pressed back and gored her antagonist, that still, however, watched her in act to spring. She was weary, and bleeding at every pore; and there seemed to be little hope of her escape, if the other hound of old Hamilcar's race should come up in time to aid his brother in the death-grapple.

Hasdrubal had commanded the Carthaginian armies in Spain for some time, with varying but generally unpropitious fortune. He had not the full authority over the Punic forces in that country which his brother and his father had previously exercised. The faction at Carthage, which was at feud with his family, succeeded in fettering and interfering with his power; and other generals were from time to time sent into Spain, whose errors and misconduct caused the reverses that Hasdrubal met with. This is expressly attested by the Greek historian Polybius, who was the intimate friend of the younger



Africanus, and drew his information respecting the second Punic war from the best possible authorities. Livy gives a long narrative of campaigns between the Roman commanders in Spain and Hasdrubal, which is so palpably deformed by fictions and exaggerations as to be hardly deserving of attention.

It is clear that in the year 208 B.C., at least, Hasdrubal out-manceuvred Publius Scipio, who held the command of the Roman forces in Spain; and whose object was to prevent him from passing the Pyrenees and march-<sup>Winters in Auvergne.</sup> ing upon Italy. Scipio expected that Hasdrubal would attempt the nearest route, along the coast of the Mediterranean; and he therefore carefully fortified and guarded the passes of the eastern Pyrenees. But Hasdrubal passed these mountains near their western extremity; and then, with a considerable force of Spanish infantry, with a small number of African troops, with some elephants and much treasure, he marched, not directly towards the coast of the Mediterranean, but in a north-eastern line towards the centre of Gaul. He halted for the winter in the territory of the Arverni, the modern Auvergne; and conciliated or purchased the good-will of the Gauls in that region so far, that he not only found friendly winter quarters among them, but great numbers of them enlisted under him, and on the approach of spring marched with him to invade Italy.

By thus entering Gaul at the south-west, and avoiding its southern maritime districts, Hasdrubal kept the Romans in complete ignorance of his precise operations and movements in that country; all that they knew was that Hasdrubal had baffled Scipio's attempts to detain him in Spain; that he had crossed the Pyrenees with soldiers, elephants, and money, and that he was raising fresh forces among the Gauls. The spring was sure to bring him into Italy; and then would come the real tempest of the war, when from the north and from the south the two Carthaginian armies, each under a son of the Thunderbolt, were to gather together around the seven hills of Rome.

In this emergency the Romans looked among themselves earnestly and anxiously for leaders fit to meet the perils of the coming campaign.

The senate recommended the people to elect, as one of their consuls, Caius Claudius Nero, a patrician of one of the families of the great Claudian house. Nero had served during the preceding years of the war, both against Hannibal in Italy, and against Hasdrubal in Spain; but it is remarkable that the histories, which we possess, record no successes as having been achieved by him either before or after his great campaign of the Metaurus. It proves much for the sagacity of the leading men of the senate, that they recognized in Nero the energy and spirit which were required at this crisis, and it is equally creditable to the patriotism of the people, that they followed the advice of the senate by electing a general who had no showy exploits to recommend him to their choice.

It was a matter of greater difficulty to find a second consul; the laws required that one consul should be a plebeian; and the plebeian nobility had been fearfully thinned by the events of the war. While the senators anxiously deliberated among themselves what fit colleague for Nero could be nominated at the coming comitia, and sorrowfully recalled the names of Marcellus, Gracchus, and other plebeian generals who were no more—one taciturn and moody old man sat in sullen apathy among the conscript fathers. This was Marcus Livius, who had been consul in the year before the beginning of this war, and had then gained a victory over the Illyrians. After his consulship he had been impeached before the people on a charge of peculation and unfair division of the spoils among his soldiers: the verdict was unjustly given against him, and the sense of this wrong, and of the indignity thus put upon him, had rankled unceasingly in the bosom of Livius, so that for eight years after his trial he had lived in seclusion at his country seat, taking no part in any affairs of state. Latterly the censors had compelled him to come to Rome and resume his place in the senate, where he used to sit gloomily apart, giving only a silent vote. At last an unjust accusation against

Election of  
generals at  
Rome.

one of his near kinsmen made him break silence; and he harangued the house in words of weight and sense, which drew attention to him, and taught the senators that a strong spirit dwelt beneath that unimposing exterior. Now, while they were debating on what noble of a plebeian house was fit to assume the perilous honours of the consulate, some of the elder of them looked on Marcus Livius, and remembered that in the very last triumph which had been celebrated in the streets of Rome this grim old man had sat in the car of victory; and that he had offered the last grand thanksgiving sacrifice for the success of the Roman arms that had bled before Capitoline Jove. There had been no triumphs since Hannibal came into Italy. The Illyrian campaign of Livius was the last that had been so honoured; perhaps it might be destined for him now to renew the long-interrupted series. The senators resolved that Livius should be put in nomination as consul with Nero; the people were willing to elect him; the only opposition came from himself. He taunted them with their inconsistency in honouring a man they had convicted of a base crime. "If I am innocent," said he, "why did you place such a stain on me? If I am guilty, why am I more fit for a second consulship than I was for my first one?" The other senators remonstrated with him, urging the example of the great Camillus, who, after an unjust condemnation on a similar charge, both served and saved his country. At last Livius ceased to object; and Caius Claudius Nero and Marcus Livius were chosen consuls of Rome.

A quarrel had long existed between the two consuls, and the senators strove to effect a reconciliation between them before the campaign. Here again Livius for a long time obstinately resisted the wish of his fellow-senators. He said it was best for the state that he and Nero should continue to hate one another. Each would do his duty better, when he knew that he was watched by an enemy in the person of his own colleague. At last the entreaties of the senators prevailed, and Livius consented to forego the feud, and to co-operate with Nero in preparing for the coming struggle.

As soon as the winter snows were thawed, Hasdrubal commenced his march from Auvergne to the Alps. He experienced none of the difficulties which his brother had met with from the mountain tribes. Hannibal's army had been the first body of regular troops that had ever traversed the regions; and, as wild animals assail a traveller, the natives rose against it instinctively, in imagined defence of their own habitations, which they supposed to be the objects of Carthaginian ambition. But the fame of the war, with which Italy had now been convulsed for eleven years, had penetrated into the Alpine passes; and the mountaineers understood that a mighty city, southward of the Alps, was to be attacked by the troops whom they saw marching among them. They not only opposed no resistance to the passage of Hasdrubal, but many of them, out of the love of enterprise and plunder, or allured by the high pay that he offered, took service with him; and thus he advanced upon Italy with an army that gathered strength at every league. It is said, also, that some of the most important engineering works which Hannibal had constructed, were found by Hasdrubal still in existence, and materially favoured the speed of his advance. He thus emerged into Italy from the Alpine valleys much sooner than had been anticipated. Many warriors of the Ligurian tribes joined him; and, crossing the river Po, he marched down its southern bank to the city of Placentia, which he wished to secure as a base for his future operations. Placentia resisted him as bravely as it had resisted Hannibal eleven years before; and for some time Hasdrubal was occupied with a fruitless siege before its walls.

Six armies were levied for the defence of Italy when the long-dreaded approach of Hasdrubal was announced. Seventy thousand Romans served in the fifteen legions of which, with an equal number of Italian allies, those armies and the garrisons were composed. Upwards of thirty thousand more Romans were serving in Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain. The whole number of Roman citizens of an age fit for military duty scarcely ex-

ceeded a hundred and thirty thousand. The census taken before the war had shown a total of two hundred and seventy thousand, which had been diminished by more than half during twelve years. These numbers are fearfully emphatic of the extremity to which Rome was reduced, and of her gigantic efforts in that great agony of her fate. Not merely men, but money and military stores, were drained to the utmost; and if the armies of that year should be swept off by a repetition of the slaughters of Thrasymene and Cannæ, all felt that Rome would cease to exist. Even if the campaign were to be marked by no decisive success on either side, her ruin seemed certain. In South Italy Hannibal had either detached Rome's allies from her, or had impoverished them by the ravages of his army. If Hasdrubal could have done the same in Upper Italy; if Etruria, Umbria, and Northern Latium had either revolted or been laid waste, Rome must have sunk beneath sheer starvation; for the hostile or desolated territory would have yielded no supplies of corn for her population; and money, to purchase it from abroad, there was none. Instant victory was a matter of life and death. Three of her six armies were ordered to the north, but the first of these was required to overawe the disaffected Etruscans. The second army of the north was pushed forward, under Porcius, the prætor, to meet and keep in check the advanced troops of Hasdrubal; while the third, the grand army of the north, which was to be under the immediate command of the consul Livius, who had the chief command in all North Italy, advanced more slowly in its support. There were similarly three armies in the south, under the orders of the other consul, Claudius Nero.

The lot had decided that Livius was to be opposed to Hasdrubal, and that Nero should face Hannibal. Hannibal at this period occupied with his veteran but much reduced forces the extreme south of Italy. It had not been expected, either by friend or foe, that Hasdrubal would effect his passage of the Alps so early in the year as actually occurred. And even when Hannibal learned that his brother was in Italy, and had advanced as far as

Livius to oppose Hasdrubal;  
Nero to check Hannibal.

Placentia, he was obliged to pause for further intelligence before he himself commenced active operations, as he could not tell whether his brother might not be invited into Etruria to aid the party there that was disaffected to Rome, or whether he would march down by the Adriatic Sea. Hannibal led his troops out of their winter quarters in Bruttium, and marched northward as far as Canusium. Nero had his head-quarters near Venusia, with an army which he had increased to forty thousand foot and two thousand five hundred horse, by incorporating under his own command some of the legions which had been intended to act under other generals in the south. There was another Roman army twenty thousand strong, south of Hannibal, at Tarentum. The strength of that city secured this Roman force from any attack by Hannibal, and it was a serious matter to march northward and leave it in his rear, free to act against all his depôts and allies in the friendly part of Italy, which for the last two or three campaigns had served him for a base of his operations. Moreover, Nero's army was so strong that Hannibal could not concentrate troops enough to assume the offensive against it without weakening his garrisons, and relinquishing, at least for a time, his grasp upon the southern provinces. To do this before he was certainly informed of his brother's operations would have been an useless sacrifice; as Nero could retreat before him upon the other Roman armies near the capital, and Hannibal knew by experience that a mere advance of his army upon the walls of Rome would have no effect on the fortunes of the war. In the hope, probably, of inducing Nero to follow him, and of gaining an opportunity of out-manceuvring the Roman consul and attacking him on his march, Hannibal moved into Lucania, and then back into Apulia;—he again marched down into Bruttium, and strengthened his army by a levy of recruits in that district. Nero followed him, but gave him no chance of assailing him at a disadvantage. Some partial encounters seem to have taken place; but the consul could not prevent Hannibal's junction with his Bruttian levies, nor could Hannibal gain an opportunity of surprising and crushing the consul. Hannibal

returned to his former head-quarters at Canusium, and halted there in expectation of further tidings of his brother's movements. Nero also resumed his former position in observation of the Carthaginian army.

Meanwhile, Hasdrubal had raised the siege of Placentia, and was advancing towards Ariminum on the Adriatic, and driving before him the Roman army under Porcius. Nor when the consul Livius had come up, and united the second and third armies of the north, could he make head against the invaders. The Romans still fell back before Hasdrubal, beyond Ariminum, beyond the Metaurus, and as far as the little town of Sena, to the south-east of that river. Hasdrubal was not unmindful of the necessity of acting in concert with his brother. He sent messengers to Hannibal to announce his own line of march, and to propose that they should unite their armies in South Umbria, and then wheel round against Rome. Those messengers traversed the greater part of Italy in safety; but, when close to the object of their mission, were captured by a Roman detachment; and Hasdrubal's letter, detailing his whole plan of the campaign, was laid, not in his brother's hands, but in those of the commander of the Roman armies of the south. Nero saw at once the full importance of the crisis. The two sons of Hamilcar were now within two hundred miles of each other, and if Rome were to be saved, the brothers must never meet alive. Nero instantly ordered seven thousand picked men, a thousand being cavalry, to hold themselves in readiness for a secret expedition against one of Hannibal's garrisons; and as soon as night had set in, he hurried forward on his bold enterprise: but he quickly left the southern road towards Lucania, and wheeling round, pressed northward with the utmost rapidity towards Picenum. He had, during the preceding afternoon, sent messengers to Rome, who were to lay Hasdrubal's letters before the senate. There was a law forbidding a consul to make war or to march his army beyond the limits of the province assigned to him; but in such an emergency Nero did not wait for the permission of the senate to execute his project, but informed them that he was

Capture of  
Hasdrubal's  
letter.

already on his march to join Livius against Hasdrubal. He advised them to send the two legions which formed the home garrison, on to Narnia, so as to defend that pass of the Flaminian road against Hasdrubal, in case he should march upon Rome before the consular armies could attack him. They were to supply the place of these two legions at Rome by a levy *en masse* in the city, and by ordering up the reserve legion from Capua. These were his communications to the senate. He also sent horsemen forward along his line of march, with orders to the local authorities to bring stores of provisions and refreshments of every kind to the road-side, and to have relays of carriages ready for the conveyance of the wearied soldiers. Such were the precautions which he took for accelerating his march; and when he had advanced some little distance from his camp, he briefly informed his soldiers of the real object of their expedition. He told them that there never was a design more seemingly audacious, and more really safe. He said he was leading them to a certain victory, for his colleague had an army large enough to balance the enemy already, so that *their* swords would decisively turn the scale. The very rumour that a fresh consul and a fresh army had come up, when heard on the battle-field (and he would take care that they should not be heard of before they were seen and felt), would settle the campaign. They would have all the credit of the victory, and of having dealt the final decisive blow. He appealed to the enthusiastic reception which they already met with on their line of march as a proof and an omen of their good fortune. And, indeed, their whole path was amidst the vows and prayers and praises of their countrymen. The entire population of the districts through which they passed, flocked to the road-side to see and bless the deliverers of their country. Food, drink, and refreshments of every kind were eagerly pressed on their acceptance. Each peasant thought a favour was conferred on him, if one of Nero's chosen band would accept aught at his hands. The soldiers caught the full spirit of their leader. Night and day they marched forwards, taking their hurried meals in the ranks, and resting by relays in the wagons which



the zeal of the country people provided, and which followed in the rear of the column.

Fortunately for Rome, while she was thus a prey to terror and anxiety, her consul's nerves were strong, and he resolutely urged on his march towards Sena, where his colleague, Livius, and the prætor Portius were en-  
The union of the consuls.  
camped; Hasdrubal's army being in position about half a mile to the north. Nero had sent couriers forward to apprise his colleague of his project and of his approach; and by the advice of Livius, Nero so timed his final march as to reach the camp at Sena by night. According to a previous arrangement, Nero's men were received silently into the tents of their comrades, each according to his rank. By these means there was no enlargement of the camp that could betray to Hasdrubal the accession of force which the Romans had received. This was considerable; as Nero's numbers had been increased on the march by the volunteers, who offered themselves in crowds, and from whom he selected the most promising men, and especially the veterans of former campaigns. A council of war was held on the morning after his arrival, in which some advised that time should be given for Nero's men to refresh themselves, after the fatigue of such a march. But Nero vehemently opposed all delay. "The officer", said he, "who is for giving time for my men here to rest themselves, is for giving time to Hannibal to attack my men, whom I have left in the camp in Apulia. He is for giving time to Hannibal and Hasdrubal to discover my march, and to manœuvre for a junction with each other in Cisalpine Gaul at their leisure. We must fight instantly, while both the foe here and the foe in the south are ignorant of our movements. We must destroy this Hasdrubal, and I must be back in Apulia before Hannibal awakes from his torpor." Nero's advice prevailed. It was resolved to fight directly; and before the consuls and prætor left the tent of Livius, the red ensign, which was the signal to prepare for immediate action, was hoisted, and the Romans forthwith drew up in battle array outside the camp.

Hasdrubal had been anxious to bring Livius and Portius to battle, though he had not judged it expedient to attack them in their lines. And now, on hearing that the Romans offered battle, he also drew up his men, and advanced towards them. No spy or deserter had informed him of Nero's arrival; nor had he received any direct information that he had more than his old enemies to deal with. But as he rode forward to reconnoitre the Roman line, he thought that their numbers seemed to have increased, and that the armour of some of them was unusually dull and stained. He noticed also that the horses of some of the cavalry appeared to be rough and out of condition, as if they had just come from a succession of forced marches. So also, though, owing to the precaution

Hasdrubal notes  
the double  
trumpets.

of Livius, the Roman camp showed no change of size, it had not escaped the quick ear of the Carthaginian general, that the trumpet, which gave the signal to the Roman legions, sounded that morning once oftener than usual, as if directing the troops of some additional superior officer. Hasdrubal, from his Spanish campaigns, was well acquainted with all the sounds and signals of Roman war; and from all that he heard and saw, he felt convinced that both the Roman consuls were before him. In doubt and difficulty as to what might have taken place between the armies of the south, and probably hoping that Hannibal also was approaching, Hasdrubal determined to avoid an encounter with the combined Roman forces, and to endeavour to retreat upon Insubrian Gaul, where he would be in a friendly country, and could endeavour to re-open his communications with his brother. He therefore led his troops back into their camp; and, as the Romans did not venture on an assault upon his entrenchments, and Hasdrubal did not choose to commence his retreat in their sight, the day passed away in inaction. At the first watch of the night, Hasdrubal led his men silently out of their camp, and moved northwards towards the Metaurus, in the hope of placing that river between himself and the Romans before his retreat was discovered. His guides betrayed him; and having purposely led

him away from the part of the river that was fordable, they made their escape in the dark, and left Hasdrubal and his army wandering in confusion along the steep bank, and seeking in vain for a spot where the stream could be safely crossed. At last they halted; and when day dawned on them Hasdrubal found that great numbers of his men, in their fatigue and impatience, had lost all discipline and subordination, and that many of his Gallic auxiliaries had got drunk, and were lying helpless in their quarters. The Roman cavalry was soon seen coming up in pursuit, followed at no great distance by the legions, which marched in readiness for an instant engagement. It was hopeless for Hasdrubal to think of continuing his retreat before them. The prospect of immediate battle might recall the disordered part of his troops to a sense of duty, and revive the instinct of discipline. He therefore ordered his men to prepare for action instantly, and made the best arrangement of them that the nature of the ground would permit.

Hasdrubal seems to have been especially deficient in cavalry, and he had few African troops, though some Carthaginians of high rank were with him. His veteran Spanish infantry, armed with helmets and shields, and short cut-and-thrust swords, were the best part of his army. These, and his few Africans, he drew up on his right wing, under his own personal command. In the centre he placed his Ligurian infantry, and on the left wing he placed or retained the Gauls, who were armed with long javelins and with huge broadswords and targets. The rugged nature of the ground in front and on the flank of this part of his line made him hope that the Roman right wing would be unable to come to close quarters with these unserviceable barbarians before he could make some impression with his Spanish veterans on the Roman left. This was the only chance that he had of victory or safety, and he seems to have done everything that good generalship could do to secure it. He placed his elephants in advance of his centre and right wing. He had caused the driver of each of them to be provided with a sharp iron spike

Hasdrubal  
at bay.

and a mallet; and had given orders that every beast that became unmanageable, and ran back upon his own ranks, should be instantly killed by driving the spike into the vertebra at the junction of the head and the spine. Hasdrubal's elephants were ten in number. We have no trustworthy information as to the amount of his infantry, but it is quite clear that he was greatly outnumbered by the combined Roman forces.

At last Nero, who found that Hasdrubal refused his left wing, and who could not overcome the difficulties of the ground in the quarter assigned to him, decided the battle by another stroke of that military genius which had inspired his march. Wheeling a brigade of his best men round the rear of the rest of the Roman army, Nero fiercely charged the flank of the Spaniards and Africans. The charge was as successful as it was sudden. Rolled back in disorder upon each other, and overwhelmed by numbers, the Spaniards and Ligurians died, fighting gallantly to the last. The Gauls, who had taken little or no part in the strife of the day, were then surrounded, and butchered almost without resistance. Hasdrubal, after having, by the confession of his enemies, done all that a general could do, when he saw that the victory was irreparably lost, scorning to survive the gallant host which he had led, and to gratify, as a captive, Roman cruelty and pride, spurred his horse into the midst of a Roman cohort; where, sword in hand, he met the death that was worthy of the son of Hamilcar and the brother of Hannibal.

Success the most complete had crowned Nero's enterprise. Returning as rapidly as he had advanced, he was again facing the inactive enemies in the south before they even knew of his march. But he brought with him a ghastly trophy of what he had done. In the true spirit of that savage brutality which deformed the Roman national character, Nero ordered Hasdrubal's head to be flung into his brother's camp. Eleven years had passed since Hannibal had last gazed on those features. The sons of Hamilcar had then planned their system of warfare against Rome, which they

had so nearly brought to successful accomplishment. Year after year had Hannibal been struggling in Italy, in the hope of one day hailing the arrival of him whom he had left in Spain, and of seeing his brother's eye flash with affection and pride at the junction of their irresistible hosts. He now saw that eye glazed in death, and, in the agony of his heart, the great Carthaginian groaned aloud that he recognized his country's destiny.

Rome was almost delirious with joy; so agonizing had been the suspense with which the battle's verdict on that great issue of a nation's life and death had been awaited; so overpowering was the sudden reaction to the consciousness of security, and to the full glow of glory and success.

Byron has termed Nero's march "unequalled", and, in the magnitude of its consequences, it is so. Viewed only as a military exploit, it remains unparalleled, save by Other famous marches. Marlborough's bold march from Flanders to the Danube, in the campaign of Blenheim, and perhaps also by the Archduke Charles's lateral march in 1796, by which he overwhelmed the French under Jourdain, and then, driving Moreau through the Black Forest and across the Rhine, for a while freed Germany from her invaders.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS, 1066

"Every school-boy knows the date of the battle of Hastings."—*Macaulay*.

It may sound paradoxical, but it is in reality no exaggeration to say, with Guizot, that England owes her liberties to her having been conquered by the Normans.

It is true that the Saxon institutions were Hastings a national blessing in disguise. the primitive cradle of English liberty, but by their own intrinsic force they could never have founded the enduring

free English constitution. It was the Conquest that infused into them a new virtue; and the political liberties of England arose from the situation in which the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-Norman populations and laws found themselves placed relatively to each other in this island. The state of England under her last Anglo-Saxon kings closely resembled the state of France under the last Carlovingian, and the first Capetian princes. The crown was feeble, the great nobles were strong and turbulent. And although there was more national unity in Saxon England than in France, although the English local free institutions had more reality and energy than was the case with anything analogous to them on the Continent in the eleventh century, still the probability is that the Saxon system of polity, if left to itself, would have fallen into utter confusion, out of which would have arisen first an aristocratic hierarchy like that which arose in France, next an absolute monarchy, and finally a series of anarchical revolutions.

The latest conquerors of this island were also the bravest and the best. I do not except even the Romans. And, in spite of our sympathies with Harold and Hereward, and our abhorrence of the founder of the New Forest, and the desolator of Yorkshire, we must confess the superiority of the Normans to the Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Danes, whom they met here in 1066, as well as to the degenerate Frank noblesse, and the crushed and servile Romanesque provincials, from whom, in 912, they had wrested the district in the north of Gaul which still bears the name of Normandy.

It was not merely by extreme valour and ready subordination or military discipline that the Normans were pre-eminent among all the conquering races of the Gothic stock, but also by their instinctive faculty of appreciating and adopting the superior civilizations which they encountered. Thus Duke Rollo and his Scandinavian warriors readily embraced the creed, the language, the laws, and the arts which France, in those troubled and evil times with which the Capetian dynasty commenced, still inherited from imperial Rome and imperial Charlemagne. "They adopted the customs, the duties, the

obedience that the capitularies of emperors and kings had established; but that which they brought to the application of those laws, was the spirit of life, the spirit of liberty—the habits also of military subordination, and the aptness for a state politic, which could reconcile the security of all with the independence of each." So also in all chivalric feelings, in enthusiastic religious zeal, in almost idolatrous respect to females of gentle birth, in generous fondness for the nascent poetry of the time, in a keen intellectual relish for subtle thought and disputation, in a taste for architectural magnificence, and all courtly refinement and pageantry, the Normans were the Paladins of the world. Their brilliant qualities were sullied by many darker traits of pride, of merciless cruelty, and of brutal contempt for the industry, the rights, and the feelings of all whom they considered the lower classes of mankind.

Their gradual blending with the Saxons softened these harsh and evil points of their national character, and in return they fired the duller Saxon mass with a new spirit of animation and power. As Campbell boldly expressed it, "*They high-mettled the blood of our veins*". Small had been the figure which England made in the world before the coming over of the Normans; and without them she never would have emerged from insignificance. The authority of Gibbon may be taken as decisive, when he pronounces that, "Assuredly England was a gainer by the Conquest". And we may proudly adopt the comment of the Frenchman Rapin, who, writing of the battle of Hastings more than a century ago, speaks of the revolution effected by it as "the first step by which England has arrived to that height of grandeur and glory we behold it in at present".

The interest of this eventful struggle, by which William of Normandy became King of England, is materially enhanced by the high personal characters of the competitors for our crown. They were three in number.

The competitors  
for the crown.

One was a foreign prince from the North, one was a foreign prince from the South, and one was a native hero of the land. Harald Hardrada, the strongest and the most chivalric of the

kings of Norway, was the first; Duke William of Normandy was the second; and the Saxon Harold, the son of Earl Godwin, was the third. Never was a nobler prize sought by nobler champions, or striven for more gallantly. The Saxon triumphed over the Norwegian, and the Norman triumphed over the Saxon: but Norse valour was never more conspicuous than when Harald Hardrada and his host fought and fell at Stamford Bridge; nor did Saxons ever face their foes more bravely than our Harold and his men on the fatal day of Hastings.

During the reign of King Edward the Confessor over this land, the claims of the Norwegian king to our crown were little thought of; and though Hardrada's predecessor, King Magnus of Norway, had on one occasion asserted that, by virtue of a compact with our former king, Hardicanute, he was entitled to the English throne, no serious attempt had been made to enforce his pretensions. But the rivalry of the Saxon Harold and the Norman William was foreseen and bewailed by the Confessor, who was believed to have predicted on his death-bed the calamities that were pending over England. Duke William was King Edward's kinsman. Harold was the head of the most powerful noble house, next to the royal blood, in England; and personally, he was the bravest and most popular chieftain in the land. King Edward was childless, and the nearest collateral heir was a puny unpromising boy. England had suffered too severely during royal minorities to make the accession of Edgar Atheling desirable; and long before King Edward's death, Earl Harold was the destined king of the nation's choice, though the favour of the Confessor was believed to lean towards the Norman duke.

A little time before the death of King Edward, Harold was in Normandy. The causes of the voyage of the Saxon earl to the Continent are doubtful; but the fact of his having been, in 1065, at the ducal court, and in the power of his rival, is indisputable. William made skilful and unscrupulous use of the opportunity. Though Harold was treated with outward courtesy and friendship, he was made fully aware that his liberty and life depended on his

Harold swears  
on the relics.



compliance with the Duke's requests. William said to him, in apparent confidence and cordiality, "When King Edward and I once lived like brothers under the same roof, he promised that if ever he became King of England, he would make me heir to his throne. Harold, I wish that thou wouldst assist me to realize this promise." Harold replied with expressions of assent: and further agreed, at William's request, to marry William's daughter Adela, and to send over his own sister to be married to one of William's barons. The crafty Norman was not content with this extorted promise; he determined to bind Harold by a more solemn pledge, which, if broken, would be a weight on the spirit of the gallant Saxon, and a discouragement to others from adopting his cause. Before a full assembly of the Norman barons, Harold was required to do homage to Duke William, as the heir-apparent of the English crown. Kneeling down, Harold placed his hands between those of the Duke, and repeated the solemn form, by which he acknowledged the Duke as his lord, and promised to him fealty and true service. But William exacted more. He had caused all the bones and relics of saints, that were preserved in the Norman monasteries and churches, to be collected into a chest, which was placed in the council-room, covered over with a cloth of gold. On the chest of relics, which were thus concealed, was laid a missal. The Duke then solemnly addressed his titular guest and real captive, and said to him, "Harold, I require thee, before this noble assembly, to confirm by oath the promises which thou hast made me, to assist me in obtaining the crown of England after King Edward's death, to marry my daughter Adela, and to send me thy sister, that I may give her in marriage to one of my barons". Harold, once more taken by surprise, and not able to deny his former words, approached the missal, and laid his hand on it, not knowing that the chest of relics was beneath. The old Norman chronicler, who describes the scene most minutely, says, when Harold placed his hand on it, the hand trembled, and the flesh quivered; but he swore, and promised upon his oath, to take Ele [Adela] to wife, and to deliver up England to the Duke,

and thereunto to do all in his power, according to his might and wit, after the death of Edward, if he himself should live: so help him God. Many cried, "God grant it!" and when Harold rose from his knees, the Duke made him stand close to the chest, and took off the pall that had covered it, and showed Harold upon what holy relics he had sworn; and Harold was sorely alarmed at the sight.

Harold was soon after this permitted to return to England; and, after a short interval, during which he distinguished himself by the wisdom and humanity with which he Disregards the oath as forced. pacified some formidable tumults of the Anglo-Danes in Northumbria, he found himself called on to decide whether he would keep the oath which the Norman had obtained from him, or mount the vacant throne of England in compliance with the nation's choice. King Edward the Confessor died on the 5th of January, 1066, and on the following day an assembly of the thanes and prelates present in London, and of the citizens of the metropolis, declared that Harold should be their king. It was reported that the dying Edward had nominated him as his successor; but the sense which his countrymen entertained of his pre-eminent merit was the true foundation of his title to the crown. Harold resolved to disregard the oath which he made in Normandy, as violent and void, and on the 7th day of that January he was anointed King of England, and received from the archbishop's hands the golden crown and sceptre of England, and also an ancient national symbol, a weighty battle-axe. He had deep and speedy need of this significant part of the insignia of Saxon royalty.

A messenger from Normandy soon arrived to remind Harold of the oath which he had sworn to the Duke "with his mouth, and his hand upon good and holy relics". "It is true," replied the Saxon king, "that I took an oath to William; but I took it under constraint: I promised what did not belong to me—what I could not in any way hold: my royalty is not my own; I could not lay it down against the will of the country, nor can I against the will of the country take a foreign wife. As

for my sister, whom the Duke claims that he may marry her to one of his chiefs, she has died within the year; would he have me send her corpse?"

William sent another message, which met with a similar answer; and then the Duke published far and wide through Christendom what he termed the perjury and bad faith of his rival; and proclaimed his intention of asserting his rights by the sword before the year should expire, and of pursuing and punishing the perjurer even in those places where he thought he stood most strongly and most securely.

Before, however, he commenced hostilities, William, with deep-laid policy, submitted his claims to the decision of the Pope. Harold refused to acknowledge this tribunal, or to answer before an Italian priest for his title as an English king. After a formal examination of William's complaints by the Pope and the cardinals, it was solemnly adjudged at Rome that England belonged to the Norman duke; and a banner was sent to William from the holy see, which the Pope himself had consecrated and blessed for the invasion of this island. The clergy throughout the Continent were now assiduous and energetic in preaching up William's enterprise as undertaken in the cause of God. Besides these spiritual arms (the effect of which in the eleventh century must not be measured by the philosophy or the indifferentism of the nineteenth), the Norman duke applied all the energies of his mind and body, all the resources of his duchy, and all the influence he possessed among vassals or allies, to the collection of "the most remarkable and formidable armament which the Western nations had witnessed". All the adventurous spirits of Christendom flocked to the holy banner, under which Duke William, the most renowned knight and sagest general of the age, promised to lead them to glory and wealth in the fair domains of England. His army was filled with the chivalry of continental Europe, all eager to save their souls by fighting at the Pope's bidding, ardent to signalize their valour in so great an enterprise, and longing also for the pay and the plunder which William liberally promised. But the Normans themselves were the pith and

flower of the army; and William himself was the strongest, the sagest, and fiercest spirit of them all.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1066, all the seaports of Normandy, Picardy, and Brittany rang with the busy sound of preparation. On the opposite side of the Channel, King Harold collected the army and the fleet with which he hoped to crush the southern invaders.

But the unexpected attack of King Harald Hardrada of Norway upon another part of England, disconcerted the skilful measures which the Saxon had taken against the menacing armada of Duke William.

Harold's renegade brother, Earl Tostig, had excited the Norse king to this enterprise, the importance of which has naturally been eclipsed by the superior interest attached to the victorious expedition of Duke William, but which was on a scale of grandeur which the Scandinavian ports had rarely, if ever, before witnessed. Hardrada's fleet consisted of two hundred war-ships, and three hundred other vessels, and all the best warriors of Norway were in his host. He sailed first to the Orkneys, where many of the islanders joined him, and then to Yorkshire. After a severe conflict near York, he completely routed Earls Edwin and Morcar, the governors of Northumbria. The city of York opened its gates, and all the country, from the Tyne to the Humber, submitted to him. The tidings of the defeat of Edwin and Morcar compelled Harold to leave his position on the southern coast, and move instantly against the Norwegians. By a remarkably rapid march, he reached Yorkshire in four days, and took the Norse king and his confederates by surprise. Nevertheless, the battle which ensued, and which was fought near Stamford Bridge, was desperate, and was long doubtful. Unable to break the ranks of the Norwegian phalanx by force, Harold at length tempted them to quit their close order by a pretended flight. Then the English columns burst in among them, and a carnage ensued, the extent of which may be judged of by the exhaustion and inactivity of Norway for a quarter of a century afterwards. King Harald Hardrada, and all the flower of his nobility, perished

Norman  
preparations  
for invading  
England.

on the 25th of September, 1066, at Stamford Bridge; a battle which was a Flodden to Norway.

Harold's victory was splendid; but he had bought it dearly by the fall of many of his best officers and men; and still more dearly by the opportunity which Duke William had gained of effecting an unopposed landing on the Sussex coast. The whole of William's shipping had assembled at the mouth of the Dive, a little river between the Seine and the Orme, as early as the middle of August. The army which he had collected, amounted to fifty thousand knights, and ten thousand soldiers of inferior degree. Many of the knights were mounted, but many must have served on foot; as it is hardly possible to believe that William could have found transports for the conveyance of fifty thousand war-horses across the Channel. For a long time the winds were adverse; and the Duke employed the interval that passed before he could set sail, in completing the organization and in improving the discipline of his army; which he seems to have brought into the same state of perfection, as was seven centuries and a half afterwards the boast of another army assembled on the same coast, and which Napoleon designed (but providentially in vain) for a similar descent upon England.

It was not till the approach of the equinox that the wind veered from the north-east to the west, and gave the Normans an opportunity of quitting the weary shores of the Dive. They eagerly embarked, and set sail; but the wind soon freshened to a gale, and drove them along the French coast to St. Valery, where the greater part of them found shelter; but many of their vessels were wrecked, and the whole coast of Normandy was strewn with the bodies of the drowned. William's army began to grow discouraged and averse to the enterprise, which the very elements thus seemed to fight against; though in reality the north-east wind which had cooped them so long at the mouth of the Dive, and the western gale which had forced them into St. Valery, were the best possible friends to the invaders. They prevented the Normans from crossing the Channel until the Saxon king and

Norman  
fleet sails.

his army of defence had been called away from the Sussex coast to encounter Harald Hardrada in Yorkshire: and also until a formidable English fleet, which by King Harold's orders had been cruising in the Channel to intercept the Normans, had been obliged to disperse temporarily for the purpose of refitting and taking in fresh stores of provisions.

Duke William used every expedient to reanimate the drooping spirits of his men at St. Valery; and at last he caused the body of the patron saint of the place to be exhumed and carried in solemn procession, while the whole assemblage of soldiers, mariners, and appurtenant priests implored the saint's intercession for a change of wind. That very night the wind veered, and enabled the mediæval Agamemnon to quit his Aulis.

With full sails, and a following southern breeze, the Norman armada left the French shores and steered for England. The invaders crossed an undefended sea, and found an undefended coast. It was in Pevensey Bay in Sussex, at Bulverhithe, between the castle of Pevensey and Hastings, that the last conquerors of this island landed, on the 29th of September, 1066.

Harold was at York, rejoicing over his recent victory, which had delivered England from her ancient Scandinavian foes, and resettling the government of the counties which  
Harold at York. Harald Hardrada had overrun, when the tidings reached him that Duke William of Normandy and his host had landed on the Sussex shore. Harold instantly hurried southward to meet this long-expected enemy. The severe loss which his army had sustained in the battle with the Norwegians must have made it impossible for any large number of veteran troops to accompany him in his forced march to London, and thence to Sussex. He halted at the capital only six days; and during that time gave orders for collecting forces from his southern and midland counties, and also directed his fleet to reassemble off the Sussex coast. Harold was well received in London, and his summons to arms was promptly obeyed by citizen, by thane, by sockman, and by

ceorl; for he had shown himself during his brief reign a just and wise king, affable to all men, active for the good of his country, and (in the words of the old historian) sparing himself from no fatigue by land or sea. He might have gathered a much more numerous force than that of William, but his recent victory had made him over-confident, and he was irritated by the reports of the country being ravaged by the invaders. As soon, therefore, as he had collected a small army in London, he marched off towards the coast: pressing forward as rapidly as his men could traverse Surrey and Sussex, in the hope of taking the Normans unawares, as he had recently by a similar forced march succeeded in surprising the Norwegians. But he had now to deal with a foe equally brave with Harald Hardrada, and far more skilful and wary.

The old Norman chroniclers describe the preparations of William on his landing, with a graphic vigour, which would be wholly lost by transfusing their racy Norman couplets and terse Latin prose into the current

The Normans  
laud.

style of modern history. It is best to follow them closely, though at the expense of much quaintness and occasional uncountness of expression. They tell us how Duke William's own ship was the first of the Norman fleet. "It was called the Mora, and was the gift of his duchess, Matilda. On the head of the ship in the front, which mariners call the prow, there was a brazen child bearing an arrow with a bended bow. His face was turned towards England, and thither he looked, as though he was about to shoot. The breeze became soft and sweet, and the sea was smooth for their landing. The ships ran on dry land, and each ranged by the other's side. There you might see the good sailors, the sergeants, and squires sally forth and unload the ships; cast the anchors, haul the ropes, bear out shields and saddles, and land the war-horses and palfreys. The archers came forth, and touched land the first, each with his bow strung, and with his quiver full of arrows, slung at his side. All were shaven and shorn; and all clad in short garments, ready to attack, to shoot, to wheel about and skirmish. All stood well equipped, and of



good courage for the fight; and they scoured the whole shore, but found not an armed man there. After the archers had thus gone forth, the knights landed all armed, with their hauberts on, their shields slung at their necks, and their helmets laced. They formed together on the shore, each armed, and mounted on his war-horse: all had their swords girded on, and rode forward into the country with their lances raised. Then the carpenters landed, who had great axes in their hands, and planes and adzes hung at their sides. They took counsel together, and sought for a good spot to place a castle on. They had brought with them in the fleet, three wooden castles from Normandy, in pieces, all ready for framing together, and they took the materials of one of these out of the ships, all shaped and pierced to receive the pins which they had brought cut and ready in large barrels; and before evening had set in, they had finished a good fort on the English ground, and there they placed their stores. All then ate and drank enough, and were right glad that they were ashore.

"When Duke William himself landed, as he stepped on the shore, he slipped and fell forward upon his two hands. Forthwith all raised a loud cry of distress. 'An evil sign,' said they, 'is here.' But he cried out lustily, 'See, my lords! by the splendour of God, I have taken possession of England with both my hands. It is now mine; and what is mine is yours.'

"The next day they marched along the sea-shore to Hastings. Near that place the Duke fortified a camp, and set up the two other wooden castles. The foragers, and those who looked out for booty, seized all the clothing and provisions they could find, lest what had been brought by the ships should fail them. And the English were to be seen fleeing before them, driving off their cattle, and quitting their houses. Many took shelter in burying-places, and even there they were in grievous alarm."

Besides the marauders from the Norman camp, strong bodies of cavalry were detached by William into the country, and these, when Harold and his army made their rapid march from



London southward, fell back in good order upon the main body of the Normans, and reported that the Saxon king was rushing on like a madman. But Harold, when he found that his hopes of surprising his adversary were vain, changed his tactics, and halted about seven miles from the Norman lines. He sent some spies, who spoke the French language, to examine the number and preparations of the enemy, who, on their return, related with astonishment that there were more priests in William's camp than there were fighting men in the English army. They had mistaken for priests all the Norman soldiers who had short hair and shaven chins; for the English laymen were then accustomed to wear long hair and moustachios. Harold, who knew the Norman usages, smiled at their words and said, "Those whom you have seen in such numbers are not priests, but stout soldiers, as they will soon make us feel."

Harold's army was far inferior in number to that of the Normans, and some of his captains advised him to retreat upon London, and lay waste the country, so as to Harold's force inferior. starve down the strength of the invaders. The policy thus recommended was unquestionably the wisest; for the Saxon fleet had now reassembled, and intercepted all William's communications with Normandy; so that as soon as his stores of provisions were exhausted he must have moved forward upon London; where Harold, at the head of the full military strength of the kingdom, could have defied his assault, and probably might have witnessed his rival's destruction by famine and disease, without having to strike a single blow. But Harold's bold blood was up, and his kindly heart could not endure to inflict on his South Saxon subjects even the temporary misery of wasting the country. "He would not burn houses and villages, neither would he take away the substance of his people."

Harold's brothers, Gurth and Leofwin, were with him in the camp, and Gurth endeavoured to persuade him to absent himself from the battle. The incident shows how well devised had been William's scheme of binding Harold by the oath on

the holy relics. "My brother," said the young Saxon prince, "thou canst not deny that either by force or free-will thou hast made Duke William an oath on the bodies of saints. Why then risk thyself in the battle with a perjury upon thee? To us, who have sworn nothing, this is a holy and a just war, for we are fighting for our country. Leave us, then, alone to fight this battle, and he who has the right will win." Harold replied that he would not look on while others risked their lives for him. Men would hold him a coward, and blame him for sending his best friends where he dared not go himself. He resolved, therefore, to fight, and to fight in person: but he was still too good a general to be the assailant in the action. He strengthened his position on the hill where he had halted, by a palisade of stakes interlaced with osier hurdles, and there, he said, he would defend himself against whoever should seek him.

The ruins of Battle Abbey at this hour attest the place where Harold's army was posted. The high altar of the abbey stood on the very spot where Harold's own standard was planted during the fight, and where the carnage was the thickest. Immediately after his victory William vowed to build an abbey on the site; and a fair and stately pile soon rose there, where for many ages the monks prayed and said masses for the souls of those who were slain in the battle, whence the abbey took its name. Before that time the place was called Senlac. Little of the ancient edifice now remains: but it is easy to trace among its relics and in the neighbourhood the scenes of the chief incidents in the action; and it is impossible to deny the generalship shown by Harold in stationing his men; especially when we bear in mind that he was deficient in cavalry, the arm in which his adversary's main strength consisted.

When it was known in the invader's camp at Hastings that King Harold had marched southward with his power, but a brief interval ensued before the two hosts met in decisive encounter.

William's only chance of safety lay in bringing on a general

engagement; and he joyfully advanced his army from their camp on the hill over Hastings, nearer to the Saxon position. But he neglected no means of weakening his opponent, and renewed his summonses and demands on Harold with an ostentatious air of sanctity and moderation.

Negotiations  
before the  
battle.

"A monk named Hugues Maigrot came in William's name to call upon the Saxon king to do one of three things—either to resign his royalty in favour of William, or to refer it to the arbitration of the Pope to decide which of the two ought to be king, or to let it be determined by the issue of a single combat. Harold abruptly replied, 'I will not resign my title, I will not refer it to the Pope, nor will I accept the single combat.' He was far from being deficient in bravery; but he was no more at liberty to stake the crown which he had received from a whole people on the chance of a duel, than to deposit it in the hands of an Italian priest. William was not at all ruffled by the Saxon's refusal, but steadily pursuing the course of his calculated measures, sent the Norman monk again, after giving him these instructions:—'Go and tell Harold, that if he will keep his former compact with me, I will leave to him all the country which is beyond the Humber, and will give his brother Gurth all the lands which Godwin held. If he still persist in refusing my offers, then thou shalt tell him, before all his people, that he is a perjurer and a liar; that he, and all who shall support him, are excommunicated by the mouth of the Pope; and that the bull to that effect is in my hands.'

"Hugues Maigrot delivered this message in a solemn tone; and the Norman chronicle says that at the word *excommunication*, the English chiefs looked at one another as if some great danger were impending. One of them then spoke as follows: 'We must fight, whatever may be the danger to us; for what we have to consider is not whether we shall accept and receive a new lord as if our king were dead: the case is quite otherwise. The Norman has given our lands to his captains, to his knights, to all his people, the greater part of whom have

already done homage to him for them; they will all look for their gift, if their duke become our king; and he himself is bound to deliver up to them our goods, our wives, and our daughters: all is promised to them beforehand. They come, not only to ruin us, but to ruin our descendants also, and to take from us the country of our ancestors. And what shall we do—whither shall we go—when we have no longer a country?' The English promised, by a unanimous oath, to make neither peace, nor truce, nor treaty with the invader, but to die, or drive away the Normans."

The 13th of October was occupied in these negotiations; and at night the Duke announced to his men that the next day would be the day of battle. That night is said to have been passed by the two armies in very different manners. The Saxon soldiers spent it in joviality, singing their national songs, and draining huge horns of ale and wine round their camp-fires. The Normans, when they had looked to their arms and horses, confessed themselves to the priests, with whom their camp was thronged, and received the sacrament by thousands at a time.

On Saturday, the 14th of October, was fought the great battle.

It is not difficult to compose a narrative of its principal incidents from the historical information which we possess,

Account of  
Wace.

especially if aided by an examination of the ground. But it is far better to adopt the spirit-stirring words of the old chroniclers, who wrote while the recollections of the battle were yet fresh, and while the feelings and prejudices of the combatants yet glowed in the bosoms of their near descendants. Robert Wace, the Norman poet, who presented his *Roman de Rou* to our Henry II, is the most picturesque and animated of the old writers; and from him we can obtain a more vivid and full description of the conflict, than even the most brilliant romance-writer of the present time can supply. We have also an antique memorial of the battle, more to be relied on than either chronicler or poet (and which confirms Wace's narrative remarkably), in the celebrated Bayeux

tapestry, which represents the principal scenes of Duke William's expedition, and of the circumstances connected with it, in minute though occasionally grotesque details, and which was undoubtedly the production of the same age in which the battle took place; whether we admit or reject the legend that Queen Matilda and the ladies of her court wrought it with their own hands in honour of the royal Conqueror.

Let us therefore suffer the old Norman chronicler to transport our imaginations to the fair Sussex scenery, north-west of Hastings, with its breezy uplands, its grassy slopes, and ridges of open down swelling inland from the sparkling sea, its scattered copses, and its denser glades of intervening forests, clad in all the varied tints of autumn, as they appeared on the morning of the fourteenth of October, eight hundred years ago. The Norman host is pouring forth from its tents; and each troop, and each company, is forming fast under the banner of its leader. The masses have been sung, which were finished betimes in the morning; the barons have all assembled round Duke William; and the Duke has ordered that the army shall be formed in three divisions, so as to make the attack upon the Saxon position in three places. The Duke stood on a hill where he could best see his men; the barons surrounded him, and he spake to them proudly. He told them how he trusted them, and how all that he gained should be theirs; and how sure he felt of conquest, for in all the world there was not so brave an army or such good men and true as were then forming around him. Then they cheered him in turn, and cried out, "You will not see one coward; none here will fear to die for love of you, if need be." And he answered them, 'I thank you well. For God's sake spare not; strike hard at the beginning; stay not to take spoil; all the booty shall be in common, and there will be plenty for everyone. There will be no safety in asking quarter or in flight: the English will never love or spare a Norman. Felons they were, and felons they are; false they were, and false they will be. Show no weakness towards them, for they will have no pity on you. Neither the coward for running well, nor the bold

man for smiting well, will be the better liked by the English, nor will any be the more spared on either account. You may fly to the sea, but you can fly no farther; you will find neither ships nor bridge there; there will be no sailors to receive you; and the English will overtake you there and slay you in your shame. More of you will die in flight than in the battle. Then, as flight will not secure you, fight, and you will conquer. I have no doubt of the victory: we have come for glory, the victory is in our hands, and we may make sure of obtaining it if we so please.' As the Duke was speaking thus, and would yet have spoken more, William Fitz Osber rode up with his horse all coated with iron: 'Sire,' said he, 'we tarry here too long, let us all arm ourselves. *Allons! Allons!*'

"Then all went to their tents, and armed themselves as they best might; and the Duke was very busy, giving every one his orders; and he was courteous to all the The Duke mounts his horse. vassals, giving away many arms and horses to them. When he prepared to arm himself, he called first for his good hauberk, and a man brought it on his arm, and placed it before him, but in putting his head in, to get it on, he unawares turned it the wrong way, with the back part in front. He soon changed it, but when he saw that those who stood by were sorely alarmed, he said, 'I have seen many a man who, if such a thing had happened to him, would not have borne arms, or entered the field the same day; but I never believed in omens, and I never will. I trust in God, for He does in all things His pleasure, and ordains what is to come to pass, according to His will. I have never liked fortune-tellers, nor believed in diviners; but I commend myself to our Lady. Let not this mischance give you trouble. The hauberk which was turned wrong, and then set right by me, signifies that a change will arise out of the matter which we are now stirring. You shall see the name of duke changed into king. Yea, a king shall I be, who hitherto have been but duke.' Then he crossed himself, and straightway took his hauberk, stooped his head, and put it on aright, and laced his helmet, and girt on his sword, which a varlet brought him. Then the

Duke called for his good horse—a better could not be found. It had been sent him by a king of Spain, out of very great friendship. Neither arms nor the press of fighting men did it fear, if its lord spurred it on. Walter Giffard brought it. The Duke stretched out his hand, took the reins, put foot in stirrup, and mounted; and the good horse pawed, pranced, reared himself up, and curvetted. The Viscount of Toarz saw how the Duke bore himself in arms, and said to his people that were around him, 'Never have I seen a man so fairly armed, nor one who rode so gallantly, or bore his arms or became his hauberk so well; neither any one who bore his lance so gracefully, or sat his horse and managed him so nobly. There is no such knight under heaven! a fair count he is, and fair king he will be. Let him fight, and he shall overcome: shame be to the man who shall fail him.'

"The barons, and knights, and men-at-arms were all now armed; the foot-soldiers were well-equipped, each bearing bow and sword; on their heads were caps, and to their <sup>William's</sup> feet were bound buskins. Some had good hides <sup>men.</sup> which they had bound round their bodies; and many were clad in frocks, and had quivers and bows hung to their girdles. The knights had hauberks and swords, boots of steel and shining helmets; shields at their necks, and in their hands lances. And all had their cognizances, so that each might know his fellow, and Norman might not strike Norman, nor Frenchman kill his countryman by mistake. Those on foot led the way, with serried ranks, bearing their bows. The knights rode next, supporting the archers from behind. Thus both horse and foot kept their course and order of march as they began; in close ranks at a gentle pace, that the one might not pass or separate from the other. All went firmly and compactly, bearing themselves gallantly.

"Harold had summoned his men, earls, barons, and vavasours, from the castles and the cities; from the ports, the villages, and boroughs. The peasants were also called <sup>Harold's</sup> together from the villages, bearing such arms as they <sup>men.</sup> found; clubs and great picks, iron forks and stakes. The

English had enclosed the place where Harold was, with his friends and the barons of the country whom he had summoned and called together.

"Harold knew that the Normans would come and attack him hand to hand; so he had early enclosed the field in which he placed his men. He made them arm early, and range themselves for the battle; he himself having put on arms and equipments that became such a lord. The Duke, he said, ought to seek him, as he wanted to conquer England; and it became him to abide the attack, who had to defend the land. He commanded the people, and counselled his barons to keep themselves altogether, and defend themselves in a body; for if they once separated, they would with difficulty recover themselves. 'The Normans', he said, 'are good vassals, valiant on foot and on horseback; good knights are they on horseback, and well used to battle; all is lost if they once penetrate our ranks. They have brought long lances and swords, but you have pointed lances and keen-edged bills; and I do not expect that their arms can stand against yours. Cleave wherever you can; it will be ill done if you spare aught.'

"The English had built up a fence before them with their shields, and with ash and other wood; and had well joined and wattled in the whole work, so as not to leave  
The English  
barricade. even a crevice; and thus they had a barricade in their front, through which any Norman who would attack them must first pass. Being covered in this way by their shields and barricades, their aim was to defend themselves; and if they had remained steady for that purpose, they would not have been conquered that day; for every Norman who made his way in, lost his life, either by hatchet or bill, by club, or other weapons. They wore short and close hauberks, and helmets that hung over their garments. King Harold issued orders and made proclamation round, that all should be ranged with their faces towards the enemy; and that no one should move from where he was; so that, whoever came, might find them ready; and that whatever anyone, be he Norman or other, should do, each should do his best to defend his own



place. Then he ordered the men of Kent to go where the Normans were likely to make the attack; for they say that the men of Kent are entitled to strike first; and that whenever the king goes to battle, the first blow belongs to them. The right of the men of London is to guard the king's body, to place themselves around him, and to guard his standard; and they were accordingly placed by the standard to watch and defend it.

"When Harold had made his reply, and given his orders, he came into the midst of the English, and dismounted by the side of the standard: Leofwin and Gurth, his brothers, were with him, and around him he had barons enough, as he stood by his standard, which was in truth a noble one, sparkling with gold and precious stones. After the victory, William sent it to the Pope, to prove and commemorate his great conquest and glory. The English stood in close ranks, ready and eager for the fight; and they moreover made a fosse, which went across the field, guarding one side of their army.

"Meanwhile the Normans appeared advancing over the ridge of a rising ground; and the first division of their troops moved onwards along the hill and across a valley. And presently another division, still larger, came in sight, close following upon the first, and they were led towards another part of the field, forming together as the first body had done. And while Harold saw and examined them, and was pointing them out to Gurth, a fresh company came in sight, covering all the plain; and in the midst of them was raised the standard that came from Rome. Near it was the Duke, and the best men and greatest strength of the army were there. The good knights, the good vassals, and brave warriors were there; and there were gathered together the gentle barons, the good archers, and the men-at-arms, whose duty it was to guard the Duke, and range themselves around him. The youths and common herd of the camp, whose business was not to join in the battle, but to take care of the harness and stores, moved off towards a rising ground. The priests and the clerks also ascended a hill, there to offer up prayers to God, and watch the event of the battle.

“Then Taillefer, who sang right well, rode mounted on a swift horse, before the Duke, singing of Charlemagne and of Roiland, of Olivier and the Peers who died in Rcncesvalles. And when they drew nigh to the English, ‘A boon, sire!’ cried Taillefer; ‘I have long served you, and you owe me for all such service. To-day, so please you, you shall repay it. I ask as my guerdon, and beseech you for it earnestly, that you will allow me to strike the first blow in the battle!’ And the Duke answered, ‘I grant it’. Then Taillefer put his horse to a gallop, charging before all the rest, and struck an Englishman dead, driving his lance below the breast into his body, and stretching him upon the ground. Then he drew his sword, and struck another, crying out, ‘Come on, come on! What do ye, sirs? lay on, lay on!’ At the second blow he struck, the English pushed forward, and surrounded and slew him. Forthwith arose the noise and cry of war, and on either side the people put themselves in motion.

“The Normans moved on to the assault, and the English defended themselves well. Some were striking, others urging onwards; all were bold, and cast aside fear. And now, behold, that battle was gathered, whereof the fame is yet mighty.

“Loud and far resounded the bray of the horns; and the shocks of the lances, the mighty strokes of maces, and the quick clashing of swords. One while the Englishmen rushed on, another while they fell back; one while the men from over the sea charged onwards, and again at other times retreated. The Normans shouted ‘Dex aie’, the English people ‘Out’. Then came the cunning manœuvres, the rude shocks and strokes of the lance and blows of the swords, among the sergeants and soldiers, both English and Norman.

“When the English fall, the Normans shout. Each side taunts and defies the other, yet neither knoweth what the other saith; and the Normans say the English bark, because they understand not their speech.

“Some wax strong, others weak: the brave exult, but the cowards tremble, as men who are sore dismayed. The Normans

press on the assault, and the English defend their post well: they pierce the hauberks, and cleave the shields, receive and return mighty blows. Again, some press forwards, others yield; and thus in various ways the struggle proceeds. In the plain was a fosse, which the Normans had now behind them, having passed it in the fight without regarding it. But the English charged, and drove the Normans before them till they made them fall back upon this fosse, overthrowing into it horses and men. Many were to be seen falling therein, rolling one over the other, with their faces to the earth, and unable to rise. Many of the English, also, whom the Normans drew down along with them, died there. At no time during the day's battle did so many Normans die as perished in that fosse. So those said who saw the dead.

"The varlets who were set to guard the harness began to abandon it as they saw the loss of the Frenchmen, when thrown back upon the fosse without power to recover themselves. Being greatly alarmed at seeing the difficulty in restoring order, they began to quit the harness, and sought around, not knowing where to find shelter. Then Duke William's brother, Odo, the good priest, the Bishop of Bayeux, galloped up, and said to them, 'Stand fast! stand fast! be quiet and move not! fear nothing, for if God please, we shall conquer yet!' So they took courage, and rested where they were; and Odo returned galloping back to where the battle was most fierce, and was of great service on that day. He had put a hauberk on, over a white aube, wide in the body, with the sleeve tight; and sat on a white horse, so that all might recognize him. In his hand he held a mace, and wherever he saw most need he held up and stationed the knights, and often urged them on to assault and strike the enemy.

"From nine o'clock in the morning, when the combat began, till three o'clock came, the battle was up and down, this way and that, and no one knew who would conquer and win the land. Both sides stood so firm and fought so well, that no one could guess which would prevail. The Norman archers with their bows shot thickly upon the English;

The battle  
at 3 P.M.

but they covered themselves with their shields, so that the arrows could not reach their bodies, nor do any mischief, how true soever was their aim, or however well they shot. Then the Normans determined to shoot their arrows upwards into the air, so that they might fall on their enemies' heads, and strike their faces. The archers adopted this scheme, and shot up into the air towards the English; and the arrows in falling struck their heads and faces, and put out the eyes of many; and all feared to open their eyes, or leave their faces unguarded.

"The arrows now flew thicker than rain before the wind; fast sped the shafts that the English called 'wibetes'. Then Harold's eye out with arrow. it was that an arrow, that had been thus shot upwards, struck Harold above his right eye, and put it out. In his agony he drew the arrow and threw it away, breaking it with his hands: and the pain to his head was so great that he leaned upon his shield. So the English were wont to say, and still say to the French, that the arrow was well shot which was so sent up against their king; and that the archer won them great glory, who thus put out Harold's eye.

"The Normans saw that the English defended themselves well, and were so strong in their position that they could do little against them. So they consulted together privily, and arranged to draw off, and pretend to flee, till the English should pursue and scatter themselves over the field; for they saw that if they could once get their enemies to break their ranks, they might be attacked and discomfited much more easily. As they had said, so they did. The Normans by little and little fled, the English following them. As the one fell back, the other pressed after; and when the Frenchmen retreated, the English thought and cried out that the men of France fled, and would never return.

"Thus they were deceived by the pretended flight, and great mischief thereby befell them; for if they had not moved from their position, it is not likely that they would have been conquered at all; but like fools they broke their lines and pursued.

"The Normans were to be seen following up their stratagem, retreating slowly so as to draw the English farther on. As they still flee, the English pursue; they push out their lances and stretch forth their hatchets: following the Normans, as they go rejoicing in the success of their scheme, and scattering themselves over the plain. And the English meantime jeered and insulted their foes with words. 'Cowards,' they cried, 'you came hither in an evil hour, wanting our lands, and seeking to seize our property, fools that ye were to come! Normandy is too far off, and you will not easily reach it. It is of little use to run back; unless you can cross the sea at a leap, or can drink it dry, your sons and daughters are lost to you.'

"And now might be heard the loud clang and cry of battle, and the clashing of lances. The English stood firm in their barricades, and shivered the lances, beating them into pieces with their bills and maces. The Normans drew their swords, and hewed down the barricades, and the English in great trouble fell back upon their standard, where were collected the maimed and wounded.

"The English fell back towards the standard, which was upon a rising ground, and the Normans followed them across the valley, attacking them on foot and horseback. Then Hue de Mortemer, with the sires D'Auviler, D'Onebac, and St. Cler, rode up and charged, overthrowing many.

English fall  
back on  
standard.

"Robert Fitz Erneis fixed his lance, took his shield, and, galloping towards the standard, with his keen-edged sword struck an Englishman who was in front, killed him, and then drawing back his sword, attacked many others, and pushed straight for the standard, trying to beat it down, but the English surrounded it, and killed him with their bills. He was found on the spot, when they afterwards sought for him, dead, and lying at the standard's foot.

"Duke William pressed close upon the English with his lance; striving hard to reach the standard with the great troop he led; and seeking earnestly for Harold, on whose account the whole war was. The Normans follow their lord,

and press around him; they ply their blows upon the English; and these defend themselves stoutly, striving hard with their enemies, returning blow for blow.

"One of them was a man of great strength, a wrestler, who did great mischief to the Normans with his hatchet; all feared him, for he struck down a great many Normans. The Duke spurred on his horse, and aimed a blow at him, but he stooped, and so escaped the stroke; then, jumping on one side, he lifted his hatchet aloft, and as the Duke bent to avoid the blow the Englishman boldly struck him on the head, and beat in his helmet, though without doing much injury. He was very near falling, however, but bearing on his stirrups he recovered himself immediately; and when he thought to have revenged himself upon the churl by killing him, he had escaped, dreading the Duke's blow. He ran back in among the English, but he was not safe even there; for the Normans seeing him, pursued and caught him; and having pierced him through and through with their lances, left him dead on the ground.

"Where the throng of the battle was greatest, the men of Kent and Essex fought wondrously well, and made the Normans again retreat, but without doing them much injury. And when the Duke saw his men fall back and the English triumphing over them, his spirit rose high, and he seized his shield and his lance, which a vassal handed to him, and took his post by his standard.

"Then those who kept close guard by him and rode where he rode, being about a thousand armed men, came and rushed with closed ranks upon the English; and with the weight of their good horses, and the blows the knights gave, broke the press of the enemy, and scattered the crowd before them, the good Duke leading them on in front. Many pursued and many fled; many were the Englishmen who fell around, and were trampled under the horses, crawling upon the earth, and not able to rise. Many of the richest and noblest men fell in that rout, but the English still rallied in places; smote down those whom they reached, and maintained the combat the

best they could; beating down the men and killing the horses. One Englishman watched the Duke, and plotted to kill him; he would have struck him with his lance, but he could not, for the Duke struck him first, and felled him to the earth.

"Loud was now the clamour, and great the slaughter; many a soul then quitted the body it inhabited. The living marched over the heaps of dead, and each side was weary of striking. He charged on who could, and he who could no longer strike still pushed forward. The strong struggled with the strong; some failed, others triumphed; the cowards fell back, the brave pressed on; and sad was his fate who fell in the midst, for he had little chance of rising again; and many in truth fell, who never rose at all, being crushed under the throng.

"And now the Normans pressed on so far, that at last they had reached the standard. There Harold had remained, defending himself to the utmost; but he was sorely wounded in his eye by the arrow, and suffered grievous pain from the blow. An armed man came in the throng of the battle, and struck him on the ventaille of his helmet, and beat him to the ground; and as he sought to recover himself, a knight beat him down again, striking him on the thick of his thigh, down to the bone.

"Gurth saw the English falling around, and that there was no remedy. He saw his race hastening to ruin, and despaired of any aid; he would have fled but could not, for the throng continually increased. And the Duke pushed on till he reached him, and struck him with great force. Whether he died of that blow I know not, but it was said that he fell under it, and rose no more.

"The standard was beaten down, the golden standard was taken, and Harold and the best of his friends were slain; but there was so much eagerness, Standard beaten down and taken. and throng of so many around, seeking to kill him, that I know not who it was that slew him.

"The English were in great trouble at having lost their king, and at the Duke's having conquered and beat down the

standard; but they still fought on, and defended themselves long, and in fact till the day drew to a close. Then it clearly appeared to all that the standard was lost, and the news had spread throughout the army that Harold for certain was dead; and all saw that there was no longer any hope, so they left the field, and those fled who could.

"William fought well; many an assault did he lead, many a blow did he give, and many receive, and many fell dead under his hand. Two horses were killed under him, and he took a third at time of need, so that he fell not to the ground; and he lost not a drop of blood. But whatever anyone did, and whoever lived or died, this is certain, that William conquered, and that many of the English fled from the field, and many died on the spot. Then he returned thanks to God, and in his pride ordered his standard to be brought and set up on high where the English standard had stood; and that was the signal of his having conquered and beaten down the foe. And he ordered his tent to be raised on the spot among the dead, and had his meat brought thither, and his supper prepared there.

"Then he took off his armour; and the barons and knights, pages and squires came, when he had unstrung his shield: and they took the helmet from his head, and the hauberk from his back, and saw the heavy blows upon his shield, and how his helmet was dented in. And all greatly wondered, and said, 'Such a baron never bestrode war-horse, or dealt such blows, or did such feats of arms; neither has there been on earth such a knight since Rollant and Olivier'.

"Thus they lauded and extolled him greatly, and rejoiced in what they saw; but grieving also for their friends who were slain in the battle. And the Duke stood meanwhile among them of noble stature and mien; and rendered thanks to the King of Glory, through whom he had the victory; and thanked the knights around him, mourning also frequently for the dead. And he ate and drank among the dead, and made his bed that night upon the field.

"The morrow was Sunday; and those who had slept upon



the field of battle, keeping watch around, and suffering great fatigue, bestirred themselves at break of day and sought out and buried such of the bodies of their dead friends as they might find. The noble ladies of the land also came, some to seek their husbands, and others their fathers, sons, or brothers. They bore the bodies to their villages, and interred them at the churches; and the clerks and priests of the country were ready, and at the request of their friends took the bodies that were found, and prepared graves and laid them therein.

"King Harold was carried and buried at Varham; but I know not who it was that bore him thither, neither do I know who buried him. Many remained on the field, and many had fled in the night."

Such is a Norman account of the battle of Hastings, which does full justice to the valour of the Saxons, as well as to the skill and bravery of the victors. It is indeed <sup>Harold's</sup> evident that the loss of the battle to the English <sup>generalship.</sup> was owing to the wound which Harold received in the afternoon, and which must have incapacitated him from effective command. When we remember that he had himself just won the battle of Stamford Bridge over Harald Hardrada by the manœuvre of a feigned flight, it is impossible to suppose that he could be deceived by the same stratagem on the part of the Normans at Hastings. But his men, when deprived of his control, would very naturally be led by their inconsiderate ardour into the pursuit that proved so fatal to them. All the narratives of the battle, however much they may vary as to the precise time and manner of Harold's fall, eulogize the generalship and the personal prowess which he displayed, until the fatal arrow struck him. The skill with which he had posted his army was proved, both by the slaughter which it cost the Normans to force the position, and also by the desperate rally which some of the Saxons made, after the battle, in the forest in the rear, in which they cut off a large number of the pursuing Normans. This circumstance is particularly mentioned by William of Poitiers, the Conqueror's

own chaplain. Indeed, if Harold, or either of his brothers, had survived, the remains of the English army might have formed again in the wood, and could at least have effected an orderly retreat, and prolonged the war. But both Gurth and Leofwin, and all the bravest thanes of Southern England, lay dead on Senlac, around their fallen king and the fallen standard of their country. The exact number of the slain on the Saxon side is unknown; but we read that on the side of the victors, out of sixty thousand men who had been engaged, no less than a fourth perished: so well had the English bill-men "plied the ghastly blow", and so sternly had the Saxon battle-axe cloven Norman casque and mail. The old historian Daniel justly as well as forcibly remarks, "Thus was tried, by the great assize of God's judgment in battle, the right of power between the English and Norman nations; a battle the most memorable of all others; and, however miserably lost, yet most nobly fought on the part of England".

Many a pathetic legend was told in after-years respecting the discovery and the burial of the corpse of our last Saxon king. The main circumstances, though they seem to vary, are perhaps reconcilable. Two of the monks of Waltham Abbey, which Harold had founded a little time before his election to the throne, had accompanied him to the battle. On the morning after the slaughter they begged and gained permission of the Conqueror to search for the body of their benefactor. The Norman soldiery and camp-followers had stripped and gashed the slain; and the two monks vainly strove to recognize from among the mutilated and gory heaps around them the features of their former king. They sent for Edith, surnamed "the Fair" and the "Swan-necked", to aid them. The eye of love proved keener than the eye of gratitude, and the Saxon lady, even in that Aceldama, knew her Harold.

The king's mother now sought the victorious Norman, and begged the dead body of her son. But William at first answered in his wrath, and in the hardness of his heart, that a man who had been false to his word and his religion should have no other sepulchre than the sand

Harold's mother  
begs his body.

of the shore. He added, with a sneer, "Harold mounted guard on the coast while he was alive; he may continue his guard now he is dead". The taunt was an unintentional eulogy; and a grave washed by the spray of the Sussex waves would have been the noblest burial-place for the martyr of Saxon freedom. But Harold's mother was urgent in her lamentations and her prayers: the Conqueror relented: like Achilles, he gave up the dead body of his fallen foe to a parent's supplications; and the remains of King Harold were deposited with regal honours in Waltham Abbey.

On Christmas-day of the same year, William the Conqueror was crowned at London, King of England.

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## CHAPTER VI

### JOAN OF ARC'S VICTORY OVER THE ENGLISH AT ORLEANS, A.D. 1429

"The eyes of all Europe were turned towards this scene; where, it was reasonably supposed, the French were to make their last stand for maintaining the independence of their monarchy and the rights of their sovereign."—HUME.

Seldom has the extinction of a nation's independence appeared more inevitable than was the case in France, when the English invaders completed their lines round Orleans, about four hundred and eighty years ago. France appears lost in 1429. A series of dreadful defeats had thinned the chivalry of France, and daunted the spirits of her soldiers. A foreign king had been proclaimed in her capital; and foreign armies of the bravest veterans, and led by the ablest captains then known in the world, occupied the fairest portions of her territory. Worse to her even than the fierceness and the strength of her foes were the factions, the vices, and the crimes of her own children. Her native prince was a dissolute trifler, stained with the assassination of the most powerful noble of the land, whose son, in revenge, had leagued himself with the enemy. Many more of her nobility, many of her prelates, her magis-

trates, and rulers, had sworn fealty to the English king. The condition of the peasantry amid the general prevalence of anarchy and brigandage, which were added to the customary devastations of contending armies, was wretched beyond the power of language to describe. The sense of terror and suffering seemed to have extended itself even to the brute creation.

In the autumn of 1428 the English, who were already masters of all France north of the Loire, prepared their forces for the conquest of the southern provinces, which yet adhered to the cause of the Dauphin. The city of Orleans, on the banks of that river, was looked upon as the last stronghold of the French national party. If the English could once obtain possession of it, their victorious progress through the residue of the kingdom seemed free from any serious obstacle. Accordingly, the Earl of Salisbury, one of the bravest and most experienced of the English generals, who had been trained under Henry V, marched to the attack of the all-important city; and, after reducing several places of inferior consequence in the neighbourhood, appeared with his army before its walls on the 12th of October, 1428.

The city of Orleans itself was on the north side of the Loire, but its suburbs extended far on the southern side, and a strong  
Position of  
Orleans. bridge connected them with the town. A fortification, which in modern military phrase would be termed a tête-du-pont, defended the bridge-head on the southern side, and two towers, called the Tourelles, were built on the bridge itself, where it rested on an island at a little distance from the tête-du-pont. Indeed, the solid masonry of the bridge terminated at the Tourelles; and the communication thence with the tête-du-pont on the southern shore was by means of a drawbridge. The Tourelles and the tête-du-pont formed together a strong fortified post, capable of containing a garrison of considerable strength; and so long as this was in possession of the Orleanais, they could communicate freely with the southern provinces, the inhabitants of which, like the Orleanais themselves, supported the cause of their Dauphin against the foreigners. Lord Salisbury rightly judged the capture of

the Tourelles to be the most material step towards the reduction of the city itself. Accordingly he directed his principal operations against this post, and after some severe repulses he carried the Tourelles by storm, on the 23rd of October. The French, however, broke down the part of the bridge which was nearest to the north bank, and thus rendered a direct assault from the Tourelles upon the city impossible. But the possession of this post enabled the English to distress the town greatly by a battery of cannon which they planted there, and which commanded some of the principal streets.

It has been observed by Hume, that this is the first siege in which any important use appears to have been made of artillery. And even at Orleans both besiegers and besieged seem to have employed their cannons <sup>The first artillery siege.</sup> more as instruments of destruction against their enemy's *men*, than as engines of demolition against their enemy's walls and works. The efficacy of cannon in breaching solid masonry was taught Europe by the Turks, a few years afterwards, at the memorable siege of Constantinople. In our French wars, as in the wars of the classic nations, famine was looked on as the surest weapon to compel the submission of a well-walled town; and the great object of the besiegers was to effect a complete circumvallation. The great ambit of the walls of Orleans, and the facilities which the river gave for obtaining succour and supplies, rendered the capture of the place by this process a matter of great difficulty. Nevertheless, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Suffolk, who succeeded him in command of the English after his death by a cannon-ball, carried on the necessary works with great skill and resolution. Six strongly-fortified posts, called bastilles, were formed at certain intervals round the town; and the purpose of the English engineers was to draw strong lines between them. During the winter little progress was made with the entrenchments, but when the spring of 1429 came, the English resumed their works with activity; the communications between the city and the country became more difficult, and the approach of want began already to be felt in Orleans.

The besieging force also fared hardly for stores and provisions, until relieved by the effects of a brilliant victory which Sir John Fastolfe, one of the best English generals, gained at Rouvrai, near Orleans, a few days after Ash Wednesday, 1429. With only sixteen hundred fighting men, Sir John completely defeated an army of French and Scots, four thousand strong, which had been collected for the purpose of aiding the Orleannais and harassing the besiegers. After this encounter, which seemed decisively to confirm the superiority of the English in battle over their adversaries, Fastolfe escorted large supplies of stores and food to Suffolk's camp, and the spirits of the English rose to the highest pitch at the prospect of the speedy capture of the city before them, and the consequent subjection of all France beneath their arms.

The Orleannais now in their distress offered to surrender the city into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy, who, though the ally of the English, was yet one of their native princes. The Regent Bedford refused these terms, and the speedy submission of the city to the English seemed inevitable. The Dauphin Charles, who was now at Chinon with his remnant of a court, despaired of maintaining any longer the struggle for his crown; and was only prevented from abandoning the country by the more masculine spirit of his queen. Yet neither she, nor the boldest of Charles's captains, could have shown him where to find resources for prolonging the war; and least of all could any human skill have predicted the quarter whence rescue was to come to Orleans and to France.

In the village of Domrémy, on the borders of Lorraine, there was a poor peasant of the name of Jacques d'Arc, respected in his station of life, and who had reared a family in virtuous habits and in the practice of the strictest devotion. His eldest daughter was named by her parents Jeannette, but she was called Jeanne by the French, which was Latinized into Johanna, and Anglicized into Joan.

At the time when Joan first attracted attention she was

about eighteen years of age. She was naturally of a susceptible disposition, which diligent attention to the legends of saints and tales of fairies, aided by the dreamy loneliness of her life while tending her father's flocks, had made peculiarly prone to enthusiastic fervour. At the same time she was eminent for piety and purity of soul, and for her compassionate gentleness to the sick and the distressed.

The district where she dwelt had escaped comparatively free from the ravages of war, but the approach of roving bands of Burgundian or English troops frequently spread terror through Domrémy. Once the village had been plundered by some of these marauders, and Joan and her family had been driven from their home, and forced to seek refuge for a time at Neufchâteau. The peasantry in Domrémy were principally attached to the House of Orleans and the Dauphin; and all the miseries which France endured were there imputed to the Burgundian faction and their allies the English, who were seeking to enslave unhappy France.

Thus, from infancy to girlhood Joan had heard continually of the woes of the war, and she had herself witnessed some of the wretchedness that it caused. A feeling of intense patriotism grew in her with her growth. The deliverance of France from the English was the subject of her reveries by day and her dreams by night. Blended with these aspirations were recollections of the miraculous interpositions of Heaven in favour of the oppressed, which she had learned from the legends of her Church. Her faith was undoubting; her prayers were fervent. "She feared no danger, for she felt no sin"; and at length she believed herself to have received the supernatural inspiration which she sought.

According to her own narrative, delivered by her to her merciless inquisitors in the time of her captivity and approaching death, she was about thirteen years old when her revelations commenced. Her own words de- <sup>Joan hears</sup> heavenly voices. scribe them best:—"At the age of thirteen a voice from God came near to her to help her in ruling herself, and that voice came to her about the hour of noon, in summer-time, while

she was in her father's garden. And she had fasted the day before. And she heard the voice on her right, in the direction of the church; and when she heard the voice she also saw a bright light. Afterwards, St. Michael and St. Margaret and St. Catherine appeared to her. They were always in a halo of glory; she could see that their heads were crowned with jewels: and she heard their voices, which were sweet and mild. She did not distinguish their arms or limbs. She heard them more frequently than she saw them; and the usual time when she heard them was when the church bells were sounding for prayer. And if she was in the woods when she heard them, she could plainly distinguish their voices drawing near to her. When she thought that she discerned the Heavenly Voices, she knelt down, and bowed herself to the ground. Their presence gladdened her even to tears; and after they departed she wept because they had not taken her with them back to Paradise. They always spoke soothingly to her. They told her that France would be saved, and that she was to save it." Such were the visions and the Voices that moved the spirit of the girl of thirteen; and as she grew older they became more frequent and more clear. At last the tidings of the siege of Orleans reached Domrémy. Joan heard her parents and neighbours talk of the sufferings of its population, of the ruin which its capture would bring on their lawful sovereign, and of the distress of the Dauphin and his court. Joan's heart was sorely troubled at the thought of the fate of Orleans; and her Voices now ordered her to leave her home; and warned her that she was the instrument chosen by Heaven for driving away the English from that city, and for taking the Dauphin to be anointed king at Rheims. At length she informed her parents of her divine mission, and told them that she must go to the Sire de Baudricourt, who commanded at Vaucouleurs, and who was the appointed person to bring her into the presence of the king, whom she was to save. Neither the anger nor the grief of her parents, who said that they would rather see her drowned than exposed to the contamination of the camp, could move her from her purpose. One of her uncles



consented to take her to Vaucouleurs, where De Baudricourt at first thought her mad, and derided her; but by degrees was led to believe, if not in her inspiration, at least in her enthusiasm and in its possible utility to the Dauphin's cause.

The inhabitants of Vaucouleurs were completely won over to her side, by the piety and devoutness which she displayed, and by her firm assurance in the truth of her mission. She told them that it was God's will that she should go to the king, and that no one but her could save the kingdom of France. She said that she herself would rather remain with her poor mother and spin; but the Lord had ordered her forth. The fame of "The Maid", as she was termed, the renown of her holiness, and of her mission, spread far and wide. Baudricourt sent her with an escort to Chinon, where the Dauphin Charles was dallying away his time. Her Voices had bidden her assume the arms and the apparel of a knight; and the wealthiest inhabitants of Vaucouleurs had vied with each other in equipping her with war-horse, armour, and sword. On reaching Chinon she was, after some delay, admitted into the presence of the Dauphin. Charles designedly dressed himself far less richly than many of his courtiers were apparelled, and mingled with them, when Joan was introduced, in order to see if the Holy Maid would address her exhortations to the wrong person. But she instantly singled him out, and kneeling before him, said, "Most noble Dauphin, the King of Heaven announces to you by me, that you shall be anointed and crowned king in the city of Rheims, and that you shall be His vicegerent in France". His features may probably have been seen by her previously in portraits, or have been described to her by others; but she herself believed that her Voices inspired her when she addressed the king; and the report soon spread abroad that the Holy Maid had found the king by a miracle; and this, with many other similar rumours, augmented the renown and influence that she now rapidly acquired.

The state of public feeling in France was now favourable to an enthusiastic belief in Divine interposition in favour of the

party that had hitherto been unsuccessful and oppressed. The humiliations which had befallen the French royal family and nobility were looked on as the just judgments of God upon them for their vice and impiety. The misfortunes that had come upon France as a nation were believed to have been drawn down by national sins. The English, who had been the instruments of Heaven's wrath against France, seemed now by their pride and cruelty to be fitting objects of it themselves. France in that age was a profoundly religious country. There was ignorance, there was superstition, there was bigotry; but there was Faith—a Faith that itself worked true miracles, even while it believed in unreal ones. At this time, also, one of those devotional movements began among the clergy in France, which from time to time occur in national Churches, without it being possible for the historian to assign any adequate human cause for their immediate date or extension. Numberless friars and priests traversed the rural districts and towns of France, preaching to the people that they must seek from Heaven a deliverance from the pillages of the soldiery, and the insolence of the foreign oppressors. The idea of a Providence that works only by general laws was wholly alien to the feelings of the age. Every political event, as well as every natural phenomenon, was believed to be the immediate result of a special mandate of God. This led to the belief that His holy angels and saints were constantly employed in executing His commands and mingling in the affairs of men. The Church encouraged these feelings; and at the same time sanctioned the concurrent popular belief that hosts of evil spirits were also ever actively interposing in the current of earthly events, with whom sorcerers and wizards could league themselves, and thereby obtain the exercise of supernatural power.

Thus all things favoured the influence which Joan obtained both over friends and foes. The French nation, as well as the English and the Burgundians, readily admitted that superhuman beings inspired her: the only question was, whether these beings were good or evil angels; whether she brought

with her "airs from heaven, or blasts from hell". This question seemed to her countrymen to be decisively settled in her favour by the austere sanctity of her life, by the holiness of her conversation, but, still more, by her exemplary attention to all the services and rites of the Church. The Dauphin at first feared the injury that might be done to his cause if he had laid himself open to the charge of having leagued himself with a sorceress. Every imaginable test, therefore, was resorted to in order to set Joan's orthodoxy and purity beyond suspicion. At last Charles and his advisers felt safe in accepting her services as those of a true and virtuous daughter of the Holy Church.

It is indeed probable that Charles himself, and some of his counsellors, may have suspected Joan of being a mere enthusiast; and it is certain that Dunois, and others of the best generals, took considerable latitude in obeying or deviating from the military orders that she gave. But over the mass of the people and the soldiery, her influence was unbounded. While Charles and his doctors of theology, and court ladies, had been deliberating as to recognizing or dismissing the Maid, a considerable period had passed away, during which a small army, the last gleanings, as it seemed, of the English sword, had been assembled at Blois, under Dunois, La Hire, Xaintrailles, and other chiefs, who to their natural valour were now beginning to unite the wisdom that is taught by misfortune. It was resolved to send Joan with this force and a convoy of provisions to Orleans. The distress of that city had now become urgent. But the communication with the open country was not entirely cut off; the Orleanais had heard of the Holy Maid whom Providence had raised up for their deliverance, and their messengers urgently implored the Dauphin to send her to them without delay.

Joan appeared at the camp at Blois, clad in a new suit of brilliant white armour, mounted on a stately black war-horse, and with a lance in her right hand, which she had learned to wield with skill and grace. Her head was unhelmeted; so that all could behold her fair and expres-

Joan in  
French camp.

sive features, her deep-set and earnest eyes, and her long black hair, which was parted across her forehead, and bound by a ribbon behind her back. She wore at her side a small battle-axe, and the consecrated sword, marked on the blade with five crosses, which had at her bidding been taken for her from the shrine of St. Catherine at Fierbois. A page carried her banner, which she had caused to be made and embroidered as her Voices enjoined. It was white satin, strewn with fleur-de-lis; and on it were the words "JHESUS MARIA", and the representation of the Saviour in His glory. Joan afterwards generally bore her banner herself in battle; she said that though she loved her sword much, she loved her banner forty times as much; and she loved to carry it because it could not kill anyone.

Thus accoutred, she came to lead the troops of France, who looked with soldierly admiration on her well-proportioned and upright figure, the skill with which she managed her war-horse, and the easy grace with which she handled her weapons. Her military education had been short, but she had availed herself of it well. She had also the good sense to interfere little with the manœuvres of the troops, leaving those things to Dunois, and others whom she had the discernment to recognize as the best officers in the camp. Her tactics in action were simple enough. As she herself described it—"I used to say to them, 'Go boldly in among the English', and then I used to go boldly in myself". Such, as she told her inquisitors, was the only spell she used; and it was one of power. But while interfering little with the military discipline of the troops, in all matters of moral discipline she was inflexibly strict. All the abandoned followers of the camp were driven away. She compelled both generals and soldiers to attend regularly at confessional: Her chaplain and other priests marched with the army under her orders; and at every halt, an altar was set up and the sacrament administered. No oath or foul language passed without punishment or censure. Even the roughest and most hardened veterans obeyed her. They put off for a time the bestial coarseness

which had grown on them during a life of bloodshed and rapine; they felt that they must go forth in a new spirit to a new career, and acknowledged the beauty of the holiness in which the heaven-sent Maid was leading them to certain victory.

Joan marched from Blois on the 25th of April with a convoy of provisions for Orleans, accompanied by Dunois, La Hire, and the other chief captains of the French; and on the evening of the 28th they approached the town. In the words of the old chronicler Hall: "The Englishmen, perceiving that they within could not long continue for faute of vitaille and poulder, keppe not their watche so diligently as thei were accustomed, nor scoured now the countrey environed as thei before had ordained. Whiche negligence the citizens shut in perceiving, sente worde thereof to the French capitaines, which with Pucelle in the dedde tyme of the nighte, and in a greate rayne and thundere, with all their vitaille and artillery entered into the citie."

When it was day, the Maid rode in solemn procession through the city, clad in complete armour, and mounted on a white horse. Dunois was by her side, and all the bravest knights of her army and of the garrison followed in her train. The whole population thronged around her; and men, women, and children strove to touch her garments, or her banner, or her charger. They poured forth blessings on her, whom they already considered their deliverer. In the words used by two of them afterwards before the tribunal which reversed the sentence, but could not restore the life of the Virgin-martyr of France, "the people of Orleans, when they first saw her in their city, thought that it was an angel from heaven that had come down to save them". Joan spoke gently in reply to their acclamations and addresses. She told them to fear God, and trust in Him for safety from the fury of their enemies. She first went to the principal church, where *Te Deum* was chanted; and then she took up her abode in the house of Jacques Bourcier, one of the principal citizens, and whose wife was a matron of good repute. She refused to attend

a splendid banquet which had been provided for her, and passed nearly all her time in prayer.

When it was known by the English that the Maid was in Orleans, their minds were not less occupied about her than

English regard her as witch. were the minds of those in the city; but it was in a very different spirit. The English believed in

her supernatural mission as firmly as the French did; but they thought her a sorceress who had come to overthrow them by her enchantments. An old prophecy, which told that a damsel from Lorraine was to save France, had long been current; and it was known and applied to Joan by foreigners as well as by the natives. For months the English had heard of the coming Maid; and the tales of miracles which she was said to have wrought had been listened to by the rough yeomen of the English camp with anxious curiosity and secret awe. She had sent a herald to the English generals before she marched for Orleans; and he had summoned the English generals in the name of the Most High to give up to the Maid who was sent by Heaven, the keys of the French cities which they had wrongfully taken: and he also solemnly adjured the English troops, whether archers, or men of the companies of war, or gentlemen, or others, who were before the city of Orleans, to depart thence to their homes, under peril of being visited by the judgment of God. On her arrival in Orleans, Joan sent another similar message; but the English scoffed at her from their towers, and threatened to burn her heralds. She determined, before she shed the blood of the besiegers, to repeat the warning with her own voice; and accordingly she mounted one of the boulevards of the town, which was within hearing of the Tourelles; and thence she spoke to the English, and bade them depart, otherwise they would meet with shame and woe. Sir William Gladsdale (whom the French call *Glacidas*) commanded the English post at the Tourelles, and he and another English officer replied by bidding her go home and keep her cows, and by ribald jests, that brought tears of shame and indignation into her eyes. But though the English leaders vaunted aloud,

the effect produced on their army by Joan's presence in Orleans was proved four days after her arrival; when, on the approach of reinforcements and stores to the town, Joan and La Hire marched out to meet them, and escorted the long train of provision wagons safely into Orleans, between the bastilles of the English, who cowered behind their walls, instead of charging fiercely and fearlessly, as had been their wont, on any French band that dared to show itself within reach.

Thus far she had prevailed without striking a blow; but the time was now come to test her courage amid the horrors of actual slaughter. On the afternoon of the day on which she had escorted the reinforcements into the city, while she was resting fatigued at home, Dunois had seized an advantageous opportunity of attacking the English bastille of St. Loup: and a fierce assault of the Orleanais had been made on it, which the English garrison of the fort stubbornly resisted. Joan was roused by a sound which she believed to be that of her Heavenly Voices; she called for her arms and horse, and, quickly equipping herself, she mounted to ride off to where the fight was raging. In her haste she had forgotten her banner; she rode back, and, without dismounting, had it given to her from the window, and then she galloped to the gate whence the sally had been made. On her way she met some of the wounded French who had been carried back from the fight. "Ha!" she exclaimed, "I never can see French blood flow without my hair standing on end." She rode out of the gate, and met the tide of her countrymen, who had been repulsed from the English fort, and were flying back to Orleans in confusion. At the sight of the Holy Maid and her banner they rallied, and renewed the assault. Joan rode forward at their head, waving her banner and cheering them on. The English quailed at what they believed to be the charge of hell; St. Loup was stormed, and its defenders put to the sword, except some few, whom Joan succeeded in saving. All her woman's gentleness returned when the combat was over. It was the first time that she had ever seen a battle-field. She wept at the sight of so many blood-stained and

mangled corpses; and her tears flowed doubly when she reflected that they were the bodies of Christian men who had died without confession.

The next day was Ascension-day, and it was passed by Joan in prayer. But on the following morrow it was resolved by the chiefs of the garrison to attack the English forts on the south of the river. For this purpose they crossed the river in boats, and after some severe fighting, in which the Maid was wounded in the heel, both the English bastilles of the Augustins and St. Jean de Blanc were captured. The Tourelles were now the only post which the besiegers held on the south of the river. But that post was formidably strong, and by its command of the bridge it was the key to the deliverance of Orleans. It was known that a fresh English army was approaching under Fastolfe to reinforce the besiegers, and should that army arrive while the Tourelles were yet in the possession of their comrades, there was great peril of all the advantages which the French had gained being nullified, and of the siege being again actively carried on.

It was resolved, therefore, by the French, to assail the Tourelles at once, while the enthusiasm which the presence and the heroic valour of the Maid had created was at its height. But the enterprise was difficult. The rampart of the tête-du-pont, or landward bulwark, of the Tourelles was steep and high; and Sir John Gladsdale occupied this all-important fort with five hundred archers and men-at-arms, who were the very flower of the English army.

Early in the morning of the 7th of May some thousands of the best French troops in Orleans heard mass and attended the confessional by Joan's orders; and then, crossing the river in boats, as on the preceding day, they assailed the bulwark of the Tourelles, "with light hearts and heavy hands". But Gladsdale's men, encouraged by their bold and skilful leader, made a resolute and able defence. The Maid planted her banner on the edge of the fosse, and then, springing down into the ditch, she placed the first ladder against the wall, and began to mount. An English archer sent an arrow at her,

Attack on  
Orleans re-  
solved on.



which pierced her corslet and wounded her severely between the neck and shoulder. She fell bleeding from the ladder; and the English were leaping down from the wall to capture her, but her followers bore her off. She was carried to the rear and laid upon the grass; her armour was taken off, and the anguish of her wound and the sight of her blood made her at first tremble and weep. But her confidence in her celestial mission soon returned: her patron saints seemed to stand before her and reassure her. She sat up and drew the arrow out with her own hands. Some of the soldiers who stood by wished to stanch the blood, by saying a charm over the wound; but she forbade them, saying that she did not wish to be cured by unhallowed means. She had the wound dressed with a little oil, and then, bidding her confessor come to her, she betook herself to prayer.

In the meanwhile, the English in the bulwark of the Tourelles had repulsed the oft-renewed efforts of the French to scale the wall. Dunois, who commanded the assailants, was at last discouraged, and gave orders for a retreat to be sounded. Joan sent for him and the other generals, and implored them not to despair. "By my God," she said to them, "you shall soon enter in there. Do not doubt it. When you see my banner wave again up to the wall, to your arms again! the fort is yours. For the present rest a little, and take some food and drink." "They did so," says the old chronicler of the siege, "for they obeyed her marvellously." The faintness caused by her wound had now passed off, and she headed the French in another rush against the bulwark. The English, who had thought her slain, were alarmed at her reappearance; while the French pressed furiously and fanatically forward. A Biscayan soldier was carrying Joan's banner. She had told the troops that directly the banner touched the wall they should enter. The Biscayan waved the banner forward from the edge of the fosse, and touched the wall with it; and then all the French host swarmed madly up the ladders that now were raised in all directions against the English fort. At this crisis the efforts of the English garrison were distracted

by an attack from another quarter. The French troops who had been left in Orleans had placed some planks over the broken part of the bridge, and advanced across them to the assault of the Tourelles on the northern side. Gladsdale resolved to withdraw his men from the landward bulwark, and concentrate his whole force in the Tourelles themselves. He was passing for this purpose across the drawbridge that connected the Tourelles and the tête-du-pont, when Joan, who by this time had scaled the wall of the bulwark, called out to him, "Surrender, surrender, to the King of Heaven! Ah, Glacidas, you have foully wronged me with your words, but I have great pity on your soul and the souls of your men." The Englishman, disdainful of her summons, was striding on across the drawbridge, when a cannon-shot from the town carried it away, and Gladsdale perished in the water that ran beneath. After his fall, the remnant of the English abandoned all further resistance. Three hundred of them had been killed in the battle, and two hundred were made prisoners.

The broken arch was speedily repaired by the exulting Orleanais; and Joan made her triumphal re-entry into the city by the bridge that had so long been closed. Every church in Orleans rang out its gratulating peal; and throughout the night the sounds of rejoicing echoed, and the bonfires blazed up from the city. But in the lines and forts which the besiegers yet retained on the northern shore there was anxious watching of the generals, and there was desponding gloom among the soldiery. Even Talbot now counselled retreat. On the following morning, the Orleanais, from their walls, saw the great forts called "London" and "St. Lawrence" in flames; and witnessed their invaders busy in destroying the stores and munitions which had been relied on for the destruction of Orleans. Slowly and sullenly the English army retired; but not before it had drawn up in battle array opposite to the city, as if to challenge the garrison to an encounter. The French troops were eager to go out and attack, but Joan forbade it. The day was Sunday. "In the name of God", she said, "let them depart, and let us

return thanks to God." She led the soldiers and citizens forth from Orleans, but not for the shedding of blood. They passed in solemn procession round the city walls; and then, while their retiring enemies were yet in sight, they knelt in thanksgiving to God for the deliverance which He had vouchsafed them.

When Charles had been anointed King of France, Joan believed that her mission was accomplished. And in truth the deliverance of France from the English, though not completed for many years afterwards, was then The Dauphin crowned king. ensured. The ceremony of a royal coronation and anointment was not in those days regarded as a mere costly formality. It was believed to confer the sanction and the grace of heaven upon the prince, who had previously ruled with mere human authority. Thenceforth he was the Lord's Anointed. Moreover, one of the difficulties that had previously lain in the way of many Frenchmen when called on to support Charles VII was now removed. He had been publicly stigmatized, even by his own parents, as no true son of the royal race of France. The queen-mother, the English, and the partisans of Burgundy, called him the "Pretender to the title of Dauphin"; but those who had been led to doubt his legitimacy, were cured of their scepticism by the victories of the Holy Maid, and by the fulfilment of her pledges. They thought that heaven had now declared itself in favour of Charles as the true heir of the crown of St. Louis; and the tales about his being spurious were thenceforth regarded as mere English calumnies. With this strong tide of national feeling in his favour, with victorious generals and soldiers round him, and a dispirited and divided enemy before him, he could not fail to conquer; though his own imprudence and misconduct, and the stubborn valour which some of the English still displayed, prolonged the war in France nearly to the time when the civil war of the Roses broke out in England, and ensured for France peace and repose.

Joan knelt before the new-crowned king in the cathedral of Rheims, and shed tears of joy. She said that she had then fulfilled the work which the Lord had commanded her. The

young girl now asked for her dismissal. She wished to return to her peasant home, to tend her parent's flocks again, and to live at her own will in her native village. She had always believed that her career would be a short one. But Charles and his captains were loth to lose the presence of one who had such an influence upon the soldiery and the people. They persuaded her to stay with the army. She still showed the same bravery and zeal for the cause of France. She was as fervent as before in her prayers, and as exemplary in all religious duties. She still heard her Heavenly Voices, but she now no longer thought herself the appointed minister of heaven to lead her countrymen to certain victory. Our admiration for her courage and patriotism ought to be increased a hundred-fold by her conduct throughout the latter part of her career, amid dangers against which she no longer believed herself to be divinely secured. Indeed, she believed herself doomed to perish in little more than a year; but she still fought on as resolutely, if not as exultingly as ever.

She was taken prisoner in a sally from Compiègne, on the 24th of May, and was imprisoned by the Burgundians first at Arras, and then at a place called Crotoy, on the Flemish coast, until November, when, for payment of a large sum of money, she was given up to the English, and taken to Rouen, which was then their main stronghold in France.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA, A.D. 1588.

"In that memorable year, when the dark cloud gathered round our coasts, when Europe stood by in fearful suspense to behold what should be the result of that great cast in the game of human politics, what the craft of Rome, the power of Philip, the genius of Farnese, could achieve against the island-queen, with her Drakes and Cecils, —in that agony of the Protestant faith and English name."—HALLAM, *Const. Hist.*, vol. i, p. 220.

On the afternoon of the 19th of July, A.D. 1588, a group of English captains was collected at the Bowling Green on the

Hoe at Plymouth, whose equals have never before or since been brought together, even at that favourite mustering-place of the heroes of the British navy. There was Sir Francis Drake, the first English circumnavigator of the globe, the terror of every Spanish coast in the Old World and the New; there was Sir John Hawkins, the rough veteran of many a daring voyage on the African and American seas, and of many a desperate battle; there was Sir Martin Frobisher, one of the earliest explorers of the Arctic seas in search of that North-West Passage which is still the darling object of England's boldest mariners; there was the high-admiral of England, Lord Howard of Effingham, prodigal of all things in his country's cause, and who had recently had the noble daring to refuse to dismantle part of the fleet, though the queen had sent him orders to do so, in consequence of an exaggerated report that the enemy had been driven back and shattered by a storm. Lord Howard (whom contemporary writers describe as being of a wise and noble courage, skilful in sea matters, wary and provident, and of great esteem among the sailors) resolved to risk his sovereign's anger, and to keep the ships afloat at his own charge, rather than that England should run the peril of losing their protection.

The admirals  
at bowls.

Another of our Elizabethan sea-kings, Sir Walter Raleigh, was at that time commissioned to raise and equip the land-forces of Cornwall; but, as he was also commander of Plymouth, we may well believe that he must have availed himself of the opportunity of consulting with the lord-admiral and other high officers which was offered by the English fleet putting into that port; and we may look on Raleigh as one of the group that was assembled at the Bowling Green on the Hoe. Many other brave men and skilful mariners, besides the chiefs whose names have been mentioned, were there, enjoying, with true sailor-like merriment, their temporary relaxation from duty. In the harbour lay the English fleet with which they had just returned from a cruise to Corunna in search of information respecting the real condition and movements of the hostile Armada. Lord Howard had ascer-

tained that our enemies, though tempest-tost, were still formidably strong; and fearing that part of their fleet might make for England in his absence, he had hurried back to the Devonshire coast. He resumed his station at Plymouth, and waited there for certain tidings of the Spaniard's approach.

A match at bowls was being played, in which Drake and other high officers of the fleet were engaged, when a small armed vessel was seen running before the wind into Plymouth harbour, with all sails set. Her commander landed in haste, and eagerly sought the place where the English lord-admiral and his captains were standing. His name was Fleming; he was the master of a Scotch privateer; and he told the English officers that he had that morning seen the Spanish Armada off the Cornish coast. At this exciting information the captains began to hurry down to the water, and there was a shouting for the ships' boats: but Drake coolly checked his comrades, and insisted that the match should be played out. He said that there was plenty of time both to win the game and beat the Spaniards. The best and bravest match that ever was scored was resumed accordingly. Drake and his friends aimed their last bowls with the same steady calculating coolness with which they were about to point their guns. The winning cast was made; and then they went on board and prepared for action, with their hearts as light and their nerves as firm as they had been on the Hoe Bowling Green.

Meanwhile the messengers and signals had been despatched fast and far through England, to warn each town and village that the enemy had come at last. In every seaport there was instant making ready by land and by sea; in every shire and every city there was instant mustering of horse and man. But England's best defence then, as ever, was her fleet; and after warping laboriously out of Plymouth harbour against the wind, the lord-admiral stood westward under easy sail, keeping an anxious look-out for the Armada, the approach of which was soon announced by Cornish fishing-boats, and signals from the Cornish cliffs.

The England of our own days is so strong, and the Spain of

our own days is so feeble, that it is not possible, without some reflection and care, to comprehend the full extent of the peril which England then ran from the power and the ambition of Spain, or to appreciate the importance of that crisis in the history of the world. We had then no Indian or Colonial Empire, save the feeble germs of our North American settlements, which Raleigh and Gilbert had recently planted. Scotland was a separate kingdom; and Ireland was then even a greater source of weakness, and a worse nest of rebellion, than she has been in after-times. Queen Elizabeth had found at her accession an encumbered revenue, a divided people, and an unsuccessful foreign war, in which the last remnant of our possessions in France had been lost; she had also a formidable pretender to her crown, whose interests were favoured by all the Roman Catholic powers; and even some of her subjects were warped by religious bigotry to deny her title, and to look on her as an heretical usurper. It is true that during the years of her reign which had passed away before the attempted invasion of 1588 she had revived the commercial prosperity, the national spirit, and the national loyalty of England. But her resources, to cope with the colossal power of Philip II, still seemed most scanty; and she had not a single foreign ally, except the Dutch, who were themselves struggling hard, and, as it seemed, hopelessly, to maintain their revolt against Spain.

On the other hand, Philip II was absolute master of an empire so superior to the other states of the world in extent, in resources, and especially in military and naval forces, as to make the project of enlarging that empire into a universal monarchy seem a perfectly feasible scheme; and Philip had both the ambition to form that project, and the resolution to devote all his energies, and all his means, to its realization. Since the downfall of the Roman empire no such preponderating power had existed in the world. During the mediæval centuries the chief European kingdoms were slowly moulding themselves out of the feudal chaos. And though their wars with each other were numerous

England v. Spain  
in 1588.

Philip's  
advantages.  
(1) Resources.

and desperate, and several of their respective kings figured for a time as mighty conquerors, none of them in those times acquired the consistency and perfect organization which are requisite for a long-sustained career of aggrandizement. After the consolidation of the great kingdoms, they for some time kept each other in mutual check. During the first half of the sixteenth century the balancing system was successfully practised by European statesmen. But when Philip II reigned, France had become so miserably weak through her civil wars that he had nothing to dread from the rival state, which had so long curbed his father the Emperor Charles V. In Germany, Italy, and Poland he had either zealous friends and dependants, or weak and divided enemies. Against the Turks he had gained great and glorious successes; and he might look round the continent of Europe without discerning a single antagonist of whom he could stand in awe. Spain, when he acceded to the throne, was at the zenith of her power. The hardihood and spirit which the Arragonese, the Castilians, and the other nations of the peninsula had acquired during centuries of free institutions and successful war against the Moors, had not yet become obliterated. Charles V. had, indeed, destroyed the liberties of Spain; but that had been done too recently for its full evil to be felt in Philip's time. A people cannot be debased in a single generation; and the Spaniards under Charles V and Philip II proved the truth of the remark, that no nation is ever so formidable to its neighbours, for a time, as is a nation, which, after being trained up in self-government, passes suddenly under a despotic ruler. The energy of democratic institutions survives for a few generations, and to it are superadded the decision and certainty which are the attributes of government, when all its powers are directed by a single mind. It is true that this preternatural vigour is short-lived: national corruption and debasement gradually follow the loss of the national liberties; but there is an interval before their workings are felt, and in that interval the most ambitious schemes of foreign conquest are often successfully undertaken.



Philip had also the advantage of finding himself at the head of a large standing army in a perfect state of discipline and equipment, in an age when, except some few insignificant corps, standing armies were unknown in Christendom. <sup>(2) Standing army.</sup> The renown of the Spanish troops was justly high, and the infantry in particular was considered the best in the world. His fleet, also, was far more numerous, and better appointed, than that of any other European power; and both his soldiers and his sailors had the confidence in themselves and their commanders which a long career of successful warfare alone can create.

Besides the Spanish crown, Philip succeeded to the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, the Duchy of Milan, Franche-Comté, and the Netherlands. In Africa he possessed Tunis, Oran, the Cape Verd and the Canary Islands; and <sup>(3) Extent of territory.</sup> in Asia, the Philippine and Sunda Islands, and a part of the Moluccas. Beyond the Atlantic he was lord of the most splendid portions of the New World which "Columbus found for Castile and Leon". The empires of Peru and Mexico, New Spain, and Chili, with their abundant mines of the precious metals, Hispaniola and Cuba, and many other of the American Islands, were provinces of the sovereign of Spain.

Philip had, indeed, experienced the mortification of seeing the inhabitants of the Netherlands revolt against his authority, nor could he succeed in bringing back beneath the Spanish sceptre all the possessions which his father <sup>(4) Generals.</sup> had bequeathed to him. But he had reconquered a large number of the towns and districts that originally took up arms against him. Belgium was brought more thoroughly into implicit obedience to Spain than she had been before her insurrection, and it was only Holland and the six other Northern States that still held out against his arms. The contest had also formed a compact and veteran army on Philip's side, which, under his great general the Prince of Parma, had been trained to act together under all difficulties and all vicissitudes of warfare; and on whose steadiness and loyalty perfect reliance might be placed throughout any

enterprise, however difficult and tedious. Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, captain-general of the Spanish armies and governor of the Spanish possessions in the Netherlands, was beyond all comparison the greatest military genius of his age. He was also highly distinguished for political wisdom and sagacity, and for his great administrative talents. He was idolized by his troops, whose affections he knew how to win without relaxing their discipline or diminishing his own authority. Pre-eminently cool and circumspect in his plans, but swift and energetic when the moment arrived for striking a decisive blow, neglecting no risk that caution could provide against, conciliating even the populations of the districts which he attacked by his scrupulous good faith, his moderation, and his address, Farnese was one of the most formidable generals that ever could be placed at the head of an army designed not only to win battles, but to effect conquests. Happy it is for England and the world that this island was saved from becoming an arena for the exhibition of his powers.

One nation only had been his active, his persevering, and his successful foe. England had encouraged his revolted subjects in Flanders against him, and given them the aid in men and money without which they must soon have been humbled in the dust. English ships had plundered his colonies; had defied his supremacy in the New World, as well as the Old; they had inflicted ignominious defeats on his squadrons; they had captured his cities, and burned his arsenals on the very coasts of Spain. The English had made Philip himself the object of personal insult. He was held up to ridicule in their stage plays and masks, and these scoffs at the man had (as is not unusual in such cases) excited the anger of the absolute king even more vehemently than the injuries inflicted on his power. Personal as well as political revenge urged him to attack England. Were she once subdued, the Dutch must submit, France could not cope with him, the empire would not oppose him; and universal dominion seemed sure to be the result of the conquest of that malignant island.

There was yet another and a stronger feeling which armed King Philip against England. He was one of the sincerest and sternest bigots of his age. He looked on himself, and was looked on by others, as the appointed champion to extirpate heresy and re-establish the Papal power throughout Europe. A powerful reaction against Protestantism had taken place since the commencement of the second half of the sixteenth century, and Philip believed that he was destined to complete it. The Reform doctrines had been thoroughly rooted out from Italy and Spain. Belgium, which had previously been half Protestant, had been reconquered both in allegiance and creed by Philip, and had become one of the most Catholic countries in the world. Half Germany had been won back to the old faith. In Savoy, in Switzerland, and many other countries, the progress of the counter-Reformation had been rapid and decisive. The Catholic League seemed victorious in France. The Papal Court itself had shaken off the supineness of recent centuries; and, at the head of the Jesuits and the other new ecclesiastical orders, was displaying a vigour and a boldness worthy of the days of Hildebrand or Innocent III.

Throughout continental Europe, the Protestants, discomfited and dismayed, looked to England as their protector and refuge. England was the acknowledged central point of Protestant power and policy; and to conquer England was to stab Protestantism to the very heart. Sixtus V, the then reigning pope, earnestly exhorted Philip to this enterprise. And when the tidings reached Italy and Spain that the Protestant Queen of England had put to death her Catholic prisoner, Mary Queen of Scots, the fury of the Vatican and Escorial knew no bounds.

The Prince of Parma, who was appointed military chief of the expedition, collected on the coast of Flanders a veteran force that was to play a principal part in the conquest of England. Besides the troops who were in his garrisons, or under his colours, five thousand infantry were sent to him from northern and central Italy, four thousand

Parma in  
Flanders.

from the kingdom of Naples, six thousand from Castile, three thousand from Arragon, three thousand from Austria and Germany, together with four squadrons of heavy-armed horse; besides which he received forces from the Franche-Comté and the Walloon country. By his command the forest of Waes was felled for the purpose of building flat-bottomed boats, which, floating down the rivers and canals to Meinport and Dunkerque, were to carry this large army of chosen troops to the mouth of the Thames, under the escort of the great Spanish fleet. Gun-carriages, fascines, machines used in sieges, together with every material requisite for building bridges, forming camps, and raising fortresses, were to be placed on board the flotillas of the Prince of Parma, who followed up the conquest of the Netherlands whilst he was making preparations for the invasion of this island. Favoured by the dissensions between the insurgents of the United Provinces and Leicester, the Prince of Parma had recovered Deventer, as well as a fort before Zutphen, which the English commanders, Sir William Stanley, the friend of Babington, and Sir Roland York, had surrendered to him, when with their troops they passed over to the service of Philip II after the death of Mary Stuart, and he had also made himself master of the Shuys. His intention was to leave to the Count de Mansfeldt sufficient forces to follow up the war with the Dutch, which had now become a secondary object, whilst he himself went at the head of fifty thousand men of the Armada and the flotilla, to accomplish the principal enterprise—that enterprise which, in the highest degree, affected the interests of the pontifical authority. In a bull, intended to be kept secret until the day of landing, Sixtus V, renewing the anathema fulminated against Elizabeth by Pius V and Gregory XIII, affected to depose her from her throne.

For some time the destination of the enormous armament of Philip was not publicly announced. Only Philip himself, the Pope Sixtus, the Duke of Guise, and Philip's favourite minister, Mendoza, at first knew its real object. Rumours were sedulously spread that it was designed

Spanish designs  
masked.

to proceed to the Indies to realize vast projects of distant conquest. Sometimes hints were dropped by Philip's ambassadors in foreign courts, that his master had resolved on a decisive effort to crush his rebels in the Low Countries. But Elizabeth and her statesmen could not view the gathering of such a storm without feeling the probability of its bursting on their own shores. As early as the spring of 1587, Elizabeth sent Sir Francis Drake to cruise off the Tagus. Drake sailed into the Bay of Cadiz and the Lisbon Roads, and burnt much shipping and military stores, causing thereby an important delay in the progress of the Spanish preparations. Drake called this "Singeing the King of Spain's beard". Elizabeth also increased her succours of troops to the Netherlanders, to prevent the Prince of Parma from overwhelming them, and from thence being at full leisure to employ his army against her dominions.

Each party at this time thought it politic to try to amuse its adversary by pretending to treat for peace, and negotiations were opened at Ostend in the beginning of 1588, which were prolonged during the first six months of that year. Nothing real was effected, and probably nothing real had been intended to be effected by them. But, in the meantime, each party had been engaged in important communications with the chief powers in France, in which Elizabeth seemed at first to have secured a great advantage, but in which Philip ultimately prevailed. "Henry III of France was alarmed at the negotiations that were going on at Ostend: and he especially dreaded any accommodation between Spain and England, in consequence of which Philip II might be enabled to subdue the United Provinces, and make himself master of France. In order, therefore, to dissuade Elizabeth from any arrangement, he offered to support her, in case she were attacked by the Spaniards, with twice the number of troops which he was bound by the treaty of 1574 to send to her assistance. He had a long conference with her ambassador, Stafford, upon this subject, and told him that the Pope and the Catholic king had entered into a league against the queen,

Position of (1)  
French king.

his mistress, and had invited himself and the Venetians to join them, but they had refused to do so. 'If the Queen of England', he added, 'concludes a peace with the Catholic king that peace will not last three months, because the Catholic king will aid the League with all his forces to overthrow her, and you may imagine what fate is reserved for your mistress after that.' On the other hand, in order most effectually to frustrate this negotiation, he proposed to Philip II to form a still closer union between the two crowns of France and Spain: and, at the same time, he secretly despatched a confidential envoy to Constantinople to warn the Sultan, that if he did not again declare war against the Catholic king, that monarch, who already possessed the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the Indies, and nearly all Italy, would soon make himself master of England, and would then turn the forces of all Europe against the Turks."

But Philip had an ally in France, who was far more powerful than the French king. This was the Duke of Guise, the chief of the League, and the idol of the fanatic partisans of the Romish faith. Philip prevailed on Guise openly to take up arms against Henry III (who was reviled by the Leaguers as a traitor to the true Church, and a secret friend to the Huguenots), and thus prevent the French king from interfering in favour of Queen Elizabeth. "With this object, the commander, Juan Iniguez Moreo, was despatched by him in the early part of April to the Duke of Guise at Soissons. He met with complete success. He offered the Duke of Guise, as soon as he took the field against Henry III, three hundred thousand crowns, six thousand infantry, and twelve hundred pikemen, on behalf of the king his master, who would, in addition, withdraw his ambassador from the court of France, and accredit an envoy to the Catholic party. A treaty was concluded on these conditions, and the Duke of Guise entered Paris, where he was expected by the Leaguers, and whence he expelled Henry III on the 12th of May, by the insurrection of the barricades. A fortnight after this insurrection, which reduced Henry III to impotence, and, to use

(2) The Duke  
of Guise.

the language of the Prince of Parma, did not even 'permit him to assist the Queen of England with his tears, as he needed them all to weep over his own misfortunes', the Spanish fleet left the Tagus and sailed towards the British isles."

Letters of a defiant kind were sent by the English council to each of the nobility, and to the great cities. The primate called on the clergy for their contributions; and by every class of the community the appeal was responded to with liberal zeal, that offered more even than the queen required. The boasting threats of the Spaniards had roused the spirit of the nation; and the whole people "were thoroughly irritated to stir up their whole forces for their defence against such prognosticated conquests; so that, in a very short time, all the whole realm, and every corner, were furnished with armed men, on horseback and on foot; and these continually trained, exercised, and put into bands, in warlike manner, as in no age ever was before in this realm. There was no sparing of money to provide horse, armour, weapons, powder, and all necessities; no, nor want of provision of pioneers, carriages, and victuals, in every county of the realm, without exception, to attend upon the armies. And to this general furniture every man voluntarily offered, very many their services personally without wages, others money for armour and weapons, and to wage soldiers: a matter strange, and never the like heard of in this realm or elsewhere. And this general reason moved all men to large contributions, that when a conquest was to be withstood wherein all should be lost, it was no time to spare a portion."

The ships of the royal navy at this time amounted to no more than thirty-six; but the most serviceable merchant vessels were collected from all the ports of the country; and the citizens of London, Bristol, and the other great seats of commerce showed as liberal a zeal in equipping and manning vessels as the nobility and gentry displayed in mustering forces by land. The seafaring population of the coast, of every rank and station, was animated by the same ready spirit; and the whole number of seamen who come for

English navy  
in 1588.



ward to man the English fleet was 17,472. The number of the ships that were collected was 191; and the total amount of their tonnage 31,985. There was one ship in the fleet (the *Triumph*) of 1100 tons, one of 1000, one of 900, two of 800 each, three of 600, five of 500, five of 400, six of 300, six of 250, twenty of 200, and the residue of inferior burden. Application was made to the Dutch for assistance; and, as Stowe expresses it, "The Hollanders came roundly in, with threescore sail, brave ships of war, fierce and full of spleen, not so much for England's aid, as in just occasion for their own defence; these men foreseeing the greatness of the danger that might ensue, if the Spaniards should chance to win the day and get the mastery over them; in due regard whereof their manly courage was inferior to none".

While the huge armada was making ready in the southern ports of the Spanish dominions, the Prince of Parma, with almost incredible toil and skill, collected a squadron of war-ships at Dunkirk, and his flotilla of other ships and of flat-bottomed boats for the transport to England of the picked troops, which were designed to be the main instruments in subduing England. Thousands of workmen were employed, night and day, in the construction of these vessels, in the ports of Flanders and Brabant. One hundred of the kind called "hendes", built at Antwerp, Bruges, and Ghent, and laden with provision and ammunition, together with sixty flat-bottomed boats, each capable of carrying thirty horses, were brought, by means of canals and fosses, dug expressly for the purpose, to Nieuport and Dunkirk. One hundred smaller vessels were equipped at the former place, and thirty-two at Dunkirk, provided with twenty thousand empty barrels, and with materials for making pontoons, for stopping up the harbours, and raising forts and entrenchments. The army which these vessels were designed to convey to England amounted to thirty thousand strong, besides a body of four thousand cavalry, stationed at Courtroi, composed chiefly of the ablest veterans of Europe.

Philip had been advised by the deserter, Sir William Stanley,



not to attack England in the first instance, but first to effect a landing and secure a strong position in Ireland; his admiral, Santa Cruz, had recommended him to <sup>Philip's plan.</sup> make sure, in the first instance, of some large harbour on the coast of Holland or Zealand, where the Armada, having entered the Channel, might find shelter in case of storm, and whence it could sail without difficulty for England; but Philip rejected both these counsels, and directed that England itself should be made the immediate object of attack; and on the 20th of May the Armada left the Tagus, in the pomp and pride of supposed invincibility, and amidst the shouts of thousands, who believed that England was already conquered. But, steering to the northward, and before it was clear of the coast of Spain, the Armada was assailed by a violent storm, and driven back with considerable damage to the ports of Biscay and Galicia. It had, however, sustained its heaviest loss before it left the Tagus, in the death of the veteran admiral Santa Cruz, who had been destined to guide it against England.

This experienced sailor, notwithstanding his diligence and success, had been unable to keep pace with the impatient ardour of his master. Philip II had reproached him with his dilatoriness, and had said with ungrateful harshness, "You make an ill return for all my kindness to you". These words cut the veteran's heart, and proved fatal to Santa Cruz. Overwhelmed with fatigue and grief, he sickened and died. Philip II had replaced him by Alonzo Perez de Gusman, Duke of Medina Sidonia, one of the most powerful of the Spanish grandees, but wholly unqualified to command such an expedition. He had, however, as his lieutenants, two seamen of proved skill and bravery, Juan de Martinez Recalde of Biscay, and Miguel Orquendo of Guipuzcoa.

On the 12th of July, the Armada having completely refitted, sailed again for the Channel, and reached it without obstruction or observation by the English.

The design of the Spaniards was, that the Armada should give them, at least for a time, the command of the sea, and that it should join the squadron which Parma had collected,

off Calais. Then, escorted by an overpowering naval force, Parma and his army were to embark in their flotilla, and cross the sea to England, where they were to be landed, together with the troops which the Armada brought from the ports of Spain. The scheme was not a little similar to the one formed against England a little more than two centuries afterwards.

Armada leaves  
Spain.

As Napoleon, in 1805, waited with his army and flotilla at Boulogne, looking for Villeneuve to drive away the English cruisers and secure him a passage across the Channel, so Parma, in 1588, waited for Medina Sidonia to drive away the Dutch and English squadrons that watched his flotilla, and to enable his veterans to cross the sea to the land that they were to conquer. Thanks to Providence, in each case England's enemy waited in vain!

Although the numbers of sail which the queen's government, and the patriotic zeal of volunteers, had collected for the defence of England, exceeded the number of sail in the Spanish fleet, the English ships were, collectively, far inferior in size to their adversaries, their aggregate tonnage being less by half than that of the enemy. In the number of guns, and weight of metal, the disproportion was still greater. The English admiral was also obliged to subdivide his force; and Lord Henry Seymour, with forty of the best Dutch and English ships, was employed in blockading the hostile ports in Flanders, and in preventing the Prince of Parma from coming out of Dunkirk.

The orders of King Philip to the Duke de Medina Sidonia were, that he should, on entering the Channel, keep near the French coast, and, if attacked by the English ships, avoid an action, and steer on to Calais roads, where the Prince of Parma's squadron was to join him. The hope of surprising and destroying the English fleet in Plymouth led the Spanish admiral to deviate from these orders, and to stand across to the English shore; but, on finding that Lord Howard was coming out to meet him, he resumed the original plan, and determined to bend his way steadily towards Calais and Dun-

kirk, and to keep merely on the defensive against such squadrons of the English as might come up with him.

It was on Saturday, the 20th of July, that Lord Effingham came in sight of his formidable adversaries. The Armada was drawn up in the form of a crescent, which from horn to horn measured some seven miles. There was a south-west wind; and before it the vast vessels sailed slowly on. The English let them pass by; and then, following in the rear, commenced an attack on them. A running fight now took place, in which some of the best ships of the Spaniards were captured; many more received heavy damage; while the English vessels, which took care not to close with their huge antagonists, but availed themselves of their superior celerity in tacking and manœuvring, suffered little comparative loss. Each day added not only to the spirit, but to the number of Effingham's force. Raleigh, Oxford, Cumberland, and Sheffield joined him; and "the gentlemen of England hired ships from all parts at their own charge, and with one accord came flocking thither as to a set field, where glory was to be attained, and faithful service performed unto their prince and their country".

But the English and Dutch found ships and mariners enough to keep the Armada itself in check, and at the same time to block up Parma's flotilla. The greater part of Seymour's squadron left its cruising ground off Dun-<sup>Parma held in check.</sup> kirk to join the English admiral off Calais; but the Dutch manned about five-and-thirty sail of good ships, with a strong force of soldiers on board, all well seasoned to the sea-service, and with these they blockaded the Flemish ports that were in Parma's power. Still, it was resolved by the Spanish admiral and the prince to endeavour to effect a junction, which the English seamen were equally resolute to prevent: and bolder measures on our side now became necessary.

The Armada lay off Calais, with its largest ships ranged outside, "like strong castles fearing no assault; the lesser placed in the middle ward". The English admiral could not attack them in their position without great disadvantage, but on the night of the 29th he sent eight fire-ships among them,

with almost equal effect to that of the fire-ships which the Greeks so often employed against the Turkish fleets in their late war of independence. The Spaniards cut their cables and put to sea in confusion. One of the largest galleasses ran foul of another vessel and was stranded. The rest of the fleet was scattered about on the Flemish coast, and when the morning broke it was with difficulty and delay that they obeyed their admiral's signal to range themselves round him near Grave-lines. Now was the golden opportunity for the English to assail them, and prevent them from ever letting loose Parma's flotilla against England; and nobly was that opportunity used. Drake and Fenner were the first English captains who attacked the unwieldy leviathans; then came Fenton, Southwell, Burton, Cross, Raynor, and then the lord admiral, with Lord Thomas Howard and Lord Sheffield. The Spaniards only thought of forming and keeping close together, and were driven by the English past Dunkirk, and far away from the Prince of Parma, who, in watching their defeat from the coast, must, as Drake expressed it, have chafed like a bear robbed of her whelps. This was indeed the last and the decisive battle between the two fleets.

It reflects little credit on the English Government that the English fleet was so deficiently supplied with ammunition as to be unable to complete the destruction of the invaders. But enough was done to ensure it. Many of the largest Spanish ships were sunk or captured in the action of this day. And at length the Spanish admiral, despairing of success, fled northward with a southerly wind, in the hope of rounding Scotland, and so returning to Spain without a farther encounter with the English fleet. Lord Effingham left a squadron to continue the blockade of the Prince of Parma's armament; but that wise general soon withdrew his troops to more promising fields of action. Meanwhile the lord-admiral himself, and Drake, chased the vincible Armada, as it was now termed, for some distance northward; and then, when it seemed to bend away from the Scotch coast towards Norway, it was thought best, in the words of Drake,

Defeat of  
Armada.

"to leave them to those boisterous and uncouth northern seas".

The sufferings and losses which the unhappy Spaniards sustained in their flight round Scotland and Ireland are well known. Of their whole Armada only fifty-three shattered vessels brought back their beaten and wasted crews to the Spanish coast which they had quitted in such pageantry and pride.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM, 1704

"The decisive blow struck at Blenheim resounded through every part of Europe: it at once destroyed the vast fabric of power which it had taken Louis XIV, aided by the talents of Turenne, and the genius of Vauban, so long to construct."—*Alison*.

"It was a famous victory."—*Southey*.

Though more slowly moulded and less imposingly vast than the empire of Napoleon, the power which Louis XIV had acquired and was acquiring at the commencement of the eighteenth century, was almost Contrast of Louis XIV and Napoleon. equally menacing to the general liberties of Europe. If tested by the amount of *permanent* aggrandizement which each procured for France, the ambition of the royal Bourbon was more successful than were the enterprises of the imperial Corsican. All the provinces that Bonaparte conquered were rent again from France within twenty years from the date when the very earliest of them was acquired. France is not stronger by a single city or a single acre for all the devastating wars of the Consulate and the Empire.

When Louis XIV took the reins of government into his own hands, after the death of Cardinal Mazarin, there was a union of ability with opportunity such as The forty years of Louis. France had not seen since the days of Charlemagne. Moreover, Louis's career was no brief one. For upwards of forty years, for a period nearly equal to the duration of Charlemagne's reign, Louis steadily followed an

aggressive and a generally successful policy. He passed a long youth and manhood of triumph, before the military genius of Marlborough made him acquainted with humiliation and defeat. The great Bourbon lived too long. He should not have outstayed our two English kings—one his dependent, James II, the other his antagonist, William III. Had he died in the year within which they died, his reign would be cited as unequalled in the French annals for its prosperity. But he lived on to see his armies beaten, his cities captured, and his kingdom wasted by disastrous war. It is as if Charlemagne had survived to be defeated by the Northmen, and to witness the misery and shame that actually fell to the lot of his descendants.

Still, Louis XIV had forty years of success; and from the permanence of their fruits we may judge what the results would have been if the last fifteen years of his reign had been equally fortunate. Had it not been for Blenheim, all Europe might at this day suffer under the effect of French conquests resembling those of Alexander in extent, and those of the Romans in durability.

When Louis XIV began to govern, he found all the materials for a strong government ready to his hand. Richelieu had completely tamed the turbulent spirit of the French nobility, and had subverted the Huguenots. The faction of the Frondeurs in Mazarin's time had had the effect of making the Parisian parliament utterly hateful and contemptible in the eyes of the nation. The Assemblies of the States-General were obsolete. The royal authority alone remained. The King was the State. Louis knew his position. He fearlessly avowed it, and he fearlessly acted up to it.

Not only was his government a strong one, but the country which he governed was strong: strong in its geographical situation, in the compactness of its territory, in the number and martial spirit of its inhabitants, and in their complete and undivided nationality. Louis had neither a Hungary nor an Ireland in his dominions. And it was not till late in his

reign, when old age had made his bigotry more gloomy, and had give fanaticism the mastery over prudence, that his persecuting intolerance caused the civil war in the Cevennes.

Like Napoleon in after-times, Louis XIV saw clearly that the great wants of France were "ships, colonies, and commerce". But Louis did more than see these wants: by the aid of his great minister, Colbert, he supplied them. One of the surest proofs of the genius of Louis was his skill in finding out genius in others, and his promptness in calling it into action. Under him Louvois organized, Turenne, Condé, Villars, and Berwick led, the armies of France; and Vauban fortified her frontiers. Throughout his reign French diplomacy was marked by skilfulness and activity, and also by comprehensive far-sightedness, such as the representatives of no other nation possessed. Guizot's testimony to the vigour that was displayed through every branch of Louis XIV's government, and to the extent to which France at present is indebted to him, is remarkable. He says, that, "taking the public services of every kind, the finances, the departments of roads and public works, the military administration, and all the establishments which belong to every branch of administration, there is not one that will not be found to have had its origin, its development, or its greatest perfection, under the reign of Louis XIV". And he points out to us, that "the government of Louis XIV was the first that presented itself to the eyes of Europe as a power acting upon sure grounds, which had not to dispute its existence with inward enemies, but was at ease as to its territory and its people, and solely occupied with the task of administering government, properly so called. All the European governments had been previously thrown into incessant wars, which deprived them of all security as well as of all leisure; or so harassed by internal parties or antagonists, that their time was passed in fighting for existence. The government of Louis XIV was the first to appear as a busy thriving administration of affairs, as a power at once definitive and progressive, which was not afraid to innovate, because it could reckon securely on the future. There

have been, in fact, very few governments equally innovating. Compare it with a government of the same nature, the un-mixed monarchy of Philip II in Spain; it was more absolute than that of Louis XIV, and yet it was far less regular and tranquil. How did Philip II succeed in establishing absolute power in Spain? By stifling all activity in the country, opposing himself to every species of amelioration, and rendering the state of Spain completely stagnant. The government of Louis XIV, on the contrary, exhibited alacrity for all sorts of innovations, and showed itself favourable to the progress of letters, arts, wealth, in short, of civilization. This was the veritable cause of its preponderance in Europe, which arose to such a pitch, that it became the type of a government not only to sovereigns, but also to nations, during the seventeenth century."

While France was thus strong and united in herself, and ruled by a martial, an ambitious, and (with all his faults) an enlightened and high-spirited sovereign, what European power was there fit to cope with her, or keep her in check?

What could  
Europe oppose  
to him?

"As to Germany, the ambitious projects of the German branch of Austria had been entirely defeated, the peace of the empire had been restored, and almost a new constitution formed, or an old revived, by the treaties of Westphalia; *nay, the imperial eagle was not only fallen, but her wings were clipped.*"

As to Spain, the Spanish branch of the Austrian house had sunk equally low. Philip II left his successors a ruined monarchy. He left them something worse; he left them his example, and his principles of government, founded in ambition, in pride, in ignorance, in bigotry, and all the pedantry of state.

It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that France, in the first war of Louis XIV, despised the opposition of both branches of the once predominant house of Austria. Indeed, in Germany, the French king acquired allies among the princes of the Empire against the

(1) Germany  
weak.  
(2) Spain  
sinking.  
(3) Hungary  
in trouble  
with Turks.



emperor himself. He had a still stronger support in Austria's misgovernment of her own subjects. The words of Bolingbroke on this are remarkable, and some of them sound as if written within very recent years. Bolingbroke says, "It was not merely the want of cordial co-operation among the princes of the Empire that disabled the emperor from acting with vigour in the cause of his family then, nor that has rendered the house of Austria a dead weight upon all her allies ever since. Bigotry, and its inseparable companion cruelty, as well as the tyranny and avarice of the court of Vienna, created in those days, and has maintained in ours, almost a perpetual diversion of the imperial arms from all effectual opposition to France. *I mean to speak of the troubles in Hungary. Whatever they became in their progress, they were caused originally by the usurpations and persecutions of the emperor: and when the Hungarians were called rebels first, they were called so for no other reason than this, that they would not be slaves.* The dominion of the emperor being less supportable than that of the Turks, this unhappy people opened a door to the latter to infest the empire, instead of making their country, what it had been before, a barrier against the Ottoman power. France became a sure though secret ally of the Turks, as well as the Hungarians, and has found her account in it, by keeping the emperor in perpetual alarms on that side, while she has ravaged the empire and the Low Countries on the other."

If, after having seen the imbecility of Germany and Spain against the France of Louis XIV, we turn to the two only remaining European powers of any importance at that time, to England and to Holland, we find the position of our own country as to European politics, from 1660 to 1688, most painful to contemplate. From 1660 to 1688, "England, by the return of the Stuarts, was reduced to a nullity". The words are Michelet's, and though severe they are just. They are, in fact, not severe enough: for when England, under her restored dynasty of the Stuarts, did take any part in European politics, her conduct, or rather her

(4) England reduced to nullity.

king's conduct, was almost invariably wicked and dishonourable.

Bolingbroke rightly says that, previous to the Revolution of 1688, during the whole progress that Louis XIV made in obtaining such exorbitant power as gave him well-grounded hopes of acquiring at last to his family the Spanish monarchy, England had been either an idle spectator of what passed on the Continent, or a faint and uncertain ally against France, or a warm and sure ally on her side, or a partial mediator between her and the powers confederated together in their common defence. But though the court of England submitted to abet the usurpations of France, and the King of England stooped to be her pensioner, the crime was not national. On the contrary, the nation cried out loudly against it even whilst it was being committed.

Holland alone, of all the European powers, opposed from the very beginning a steady and uniform resistance to the ambition and power of the French king. It was against (5) Holland is the key. Holland that the fiercest attacks of France were made, and though often apparently on the eve of complete success, they were always ultimately baffled by the stubborn bravery of the Dutch, and the heroism of their leader, William of Orange. When he became king of England, the power of this country was thrown decidedly into the scale against France; but though the contest was thus rendered less unequal, though William acted throughout "with invincible firmness, like a patriot and a hero", France had the general superiority in every war and in every treaty: and the commencement of the eighteenth century found the last league against her dissolved, all the forces of the confederates against her dispersed, and many disbanded; while France continued armed, with her veteran forces by sea and land increased, and held in readiness to act on all sides, whenever the opportunity should arise for seizing on the great prizes which, from the very beginning of his reign, had never been lost sight of by her king.

It must be borne in mind that the ambition of Louis in

these wars was twofold. It had its immediate and its ulterior objects. Its immediate object was to conquer and annex to France the neighbouring provinces and towns that were most convenient for the increase of her strength; but the ulterior object of Louis, from the time of his marriage to the Spanish Infanta in 1659, was to acquire for the house of Bourbon the whole empire of Spain. A formal renunciation of all right to the Spanish succession had been made at the time of the marriage; but such renunciations were never of any practical effect, and many casuists and jurists of the age even held them to be intrinsically void. As time passed on, and the prospect of Charles II of Spain dying without lineal heirs became more and more certain, so did the claims of the house of Bourbon to the Spanish crown after his death become matters of urgent interest to French ambition on the one hand, and to the other powers of Europe on the other. At length the unhappy King of Spain died. By his will he appointed Philip, Duke of Anjou, one of Louis XIV's grandsons, to succeed him on the throne of Spain, and strictly forbade any partition of his dominions. Louis well knew that a general European war would follow if he accepted for his house the crown thus bequeathed. But he had been preparing for this crisis throughout his reign. He sent his grandson into Spain as King Philip V of that country, addressing to him on his departure the memorable words, "There are no longer any Pyrenees".

Far-reaching  
marriage policy  
of Louis XIV.  
"No Pyrenees."

The empire, which now received the grandson of Louis as its king, comprised, besides Spain itself, the strongest part of the Netherlands, Sardinia, Sicily, Naples, the principality of Milan and other possessions in Italy, the Philippines and Manilla Islands in Asia, and, in the New World, besides California and Florida, the greatest part of Central and of Southern America. Philip was well received in Madrid, where he was crowned as King Philip V in the beginning of 1701. The distant portions of his empire sent in their adhesion; and the house of Bourbon, either by its French

Position of  
Spain.

or Spanish troops, now had occupation both of the kingdom of Francis I, and of the fairest and amplest portion of the empire of the great rival of Francis, Charles V.

Loud was the wrath of Austria; whose princes were the rival claimants of the Bourbons for the empire of Spain. The indignation of William III, though not equally loud, was far more deep and energetic. By his exertions a league against the house of Bourbon was formed between England, Holland, and the Austrian emperor, which was subsequently joined by the kings of Portugal and Prussia, by the Duke of Savoy, and by Denmark. Indeed, the alarm throughout Europe was now general and urgent. It was clear that Louis aimed at consolidating France and the Spanish dominions into one preponderating empire. At the moment when Philip was departing to take possession of Spain, Louis had issued letters-patent in his favour to the effect of preserving his rights to the throne of France. And Louis had himself obtained possession of the important frontier of the Spanish Netherlands, with its numerous fortified cities, which were given up to his troops under pretence of securing them for the young king of Spain. Whether the formal union of the two crowns was likely to take place speedily or not, it was evident that the resources of the whole Spanish monarchy were now virtually at the French king's disposal.

The peril that seemed to menace the empire, England, Holland, and the other independent powers, is well summed up by Alison: "Spain had threatened the liberties of Europe in the end of the sixteenth century, France had all but overthrown them in the close of the seventeenth.

What hope was there of their being able to make head against them both, united under such a monarch as Louis XIV?"

The death of King William on the 8th of March, 1702, at first seemed likely to paralyse the league against France, for "notwithstanding the ill-success with which he made war generally, he was looked upon as the sole centre of union that could keep together the great confederacy then forming; and how much the French

France the  
bully of  
Europe.

Confederacy  
under  
Marlborough.

feared from his life, had appeared a few years before, in the extravagant and indecent joy they expressed on a false report of his death. A short time showed how vain the fears of some, and the hopes of others were." Queen Anne, within three days after her accession, went down to the House of Lords, and there declared her resolution to support the measures planned by her predecessor, who had been "the great support, not only of these kingdoms, but of all Europe". Anne was married to Prince George of Denmark, and by her accession to the English throne the confederacy against Louis obtained the aid of the troops of Denmark; but Anne's strong attachment to one of her female friends led to far more important advantages to the anti-Gallician confederacy, than the acquisition of many armies, for it gave them MARLBOROUGH as their Captain-General.

King William's knowledge of Marlborough's high abilities, though he knew his faithlessness equally well, is said to have caused that sovereign in his last illness to recommend Marlborough to his successor as the fittest person to command her armies: but Marlborough's favour with the new queen, by means of his wife, was so high, that he was certain of obtaining the highest employment: and the war against Louis opened to him a glorious theatre for the display of those military talents, which he had before only had an opportunity of exercising in a subordinate character and on far less conspicuous scenes.

He was not only made captain-general of the English forces at home and abroad, but such was the authority of England in the council of the Grand Alliance, and Marlborough was so skilled in winning golden opinions from all whom he met with, that, on his reaching the Hague, he was received with transports of joy by the Dutch, and it was agreed by the heads of that republic, and the minister of the Emperor, that Marlborough should have the chief command of all the allied armies.

Marlborough's  
great tact  
and prudence.

It must indeed, in justice to Marlborough, be borne in mind, that mere military skill was by no means all that was required

of him in this arduous and invidious station. Had it not been for his unrivalled patience and sweetness of temper, and his marvellous ability in discerning the character of those with whom he had to act, his intuitive perception of those who were to be thoroughly trusted, and of those who were to be amused with the mere semblance of respect and confidence,—had not Marlborough possessed and employed, while at the head of the allied armies, all the qualifications of a polished courtier and a great statesman, he never would have led the allied armies to the Danube. The Confederacy would not have held together for a single year. His great political adversary, Bolingbroke, does him ample justice here. Bolingbroke, after referring to the loss which King William's death seemed to inflict on the cause of the Allies, observes that, "By his death, the Duke of Marlborough was raised to the head of the army, and, indeed, of the Confederacy; where he, a new, a private man, a subject, acquired by merit and by management a more deciding influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain, had given to King William. Not only all the parts of that vast machine, the Grand Alliance, were kept more compact and entire; but a more rapid and vigorous motion was given to the whole; and instead of languishing and disastrous campaigns, we saw every scene of the war full of action. All those wherein he appeared, and many of those wherein he was not then an actor, but abettor, however, of their action, were crowned with the most triumphant success.

"I take with pleasure this opportunity of doing justice to that great man, whose faults I knew, whose virtues I admired; and whose memory, as the greatest general and as the greatest minister that our country, or perhaps any other, has produced, I honour."

War was formally declared by the Allies against France on the 4th of May, 1702. The principal scenes of its operation were, at first, Flanders, the Upper Rhine, and North Italy. Marlborough headed the allied troops in Flanders during the first two years of the war, and took some towns from the enemy, but nothing decisive occurred. Nor

The Allies  
declare war.

did any actions of importance take place during this period between the rival armies in Italy. But in the centre of that line from north to south, from the mouth of the Scheldt to the mouth of the Po, along which the war was carried on, the generals of Louis XIV acquired advantages in 1703, which threatened one chief member of the Grand Alliance with utter destruction. France had obtained the important assistance of Bavaria as her confederate in the war. The Elector of this powerful German state made himself master of the strong fortress of Ulm, and opened a communication with the French armies on the Upper Rhine. By this junction, the troops of Louis were enabled to assail the Emperor in the very heart of Germany. In the autumn of the year 1703 the combined armies of the Elector and French king completely defeated the Imperialists in Bavaria; and in the following winter they made themselves masters of the important cities of Augsburg and Passau. Meanwhile the French army of the Upper Rhine and Moselle had beaten the allied armies opposed to them, and taken Treves and Landau. At the same time the discontents in Hungary with Austria again broke out into open insurrection, so as to distract the attention, and complete the terror of the Emperor and his council at Vienna.

Louis XIV ordered the next campaign to be commenced by his troops on a scale of grandeur and with a boldness of enterprise such as even Napoleon's military schemes have seldom equalled. On the extreme left of the line of the war, in the Netherlands, the French armies were to act only on the defensive. The fortresses in the hands of the French there were so many and so strong that no serious impression seemed likely to be made by the Allies on the French frontier in that quarter during one campaign; and that one campaign was to give France such triumphs elsewhere as would (it was hoped) determine the war. Large detachments were, therefore, to be made from the French force in Flanders, and they were to be led by Marshal Villeroy to the Moselle and Upper Rhine. The French army already in the neighbourhood of those rivers was to march under

Gigantic  
scheme of  
Louis.



Marshal Tallard through the Black Forest, and join the Elector of Bavaria and the French troops that were already with the Elector under Marshal Marsin. Meanwhile the French army of Italy was to advance through the Tyrol into Austria, and the whole forces were to combine between the Danube and the Inn. A strong body of troops was to be despatched into Hungary, to assist and organize the insurgents in that kingdom; and the French grand army of the Danube was then, in collected and irresistible might, to march upon Vienna, and dictate terms of peace to the Emperor. High military genius was shown in the formation of this plan, but it was met and baffled by a genius higher still.

Marlborough had watched, with the deepest anxiety, the progress of the French arms on the Rhine and in Bavaria, and

Marlborough depends on Heinsius and Eugene.

he saw the futility of carrying on a war of posts and sieges in Flanders while death-blows to the empire were being dealt on the Danube.

He resolved therefore to let the war in Flanders languish for a year, while he moved with all the disposable forces that he could collect to the central scenes of decisive operations. Such a march was in itself difficult, but Marlborough had, in the first instance, to overcome the still greater difficulty of obtaining the consent and cheerful co-operation of the Allies, especially of the Dutch, whose frontier it was proposed thus to deprive of the larger part of the force which had hitherto been its protection. Fortunately, among the many slothful, the many foolish, the many timid, and the not few treacherous rulers, statesmen, and generals of different nations with whom he had to deal, there were two men, eminent both in ability and integrity, who entered fully into Marlborough's projects, and who, from the stations which they occupied, were enabled materially to forward them. One of these was the Dutch statesman Heinsius, who had been the cordial supporter of King William, and who now, with equal zeal and good faith, supported Marlborough in the councils of the Allies; the other was the celebrated general, Prince Eugene, whom the Austrian cabinet had recalled from the Italian frontier, to



take the command of one of the Emperor's armies in Germany. To these two great men, and a few more, Marlborough communicated his plan freely and unreservedly; but to the general councils of his allies he only disclosed part of his daring scheme. He proposed to the Dutch that he should march from Flanders to the Upper Rhine and Moselle, with the British troops and part of the Foreign auxiliaries, and commence vigorous operations against the French armies in that quarter, whilst General Auverquerque, with the Dutch and the remainder of the auxiliaries maintained a defensive war in the Netherland. Having with difficulty obtained the consent of the Dutch to this portion of his project, he exercised the same diplomatic zeal, with the same success, in urging the King of Prussia, and other princes of the empire, to increase the number of the troops which they supplied, and to post them in places convenient for his own intended movements.

He discloses  
his scheme.

Marlborough commenced his celebrated march on the 19th of May. The army, which he was to lead had been assembled by his brother, General Churchill, at Bedburg, not far from Maestricht on the Meuse: it included sixteen thousand English troops, and consisted of fifty-one battalions of foot, and ninety-two squadrons of horse. Marlborough was to collect and join with him on his march the troops of Prussia, Luneburg, and Hesse, quartered on the Rhine, and eleven Dutch battalions that were stationed at Rothweil. He had only marched a single day, when the series of interruptions, complaints, and requisitions from the other leaders of the Allies began, to which he seemed doomed throughout his enterprise, and which would have caused its failure in the hands of anyone not gifted with the firmness and the exquisite temper of Marlborough. One specimen of these annoyances and of Marlborough's mode of dealing with them may suffice. On his encamping at Kupa, on the 20th, he received an express from Auverquerque pressing him to halt, because Villeroy, who commanded the French army in Flanders, had quitted the lines which he had been occupying,

Marlborough  
begins his  
march.

and crossed the Meuse at Namur with thirty-six battalions and forty-five squadrons, and was threatening the town of Huys. At the same time Marlborough received letters from the Margrave of Baden and Count Wratislaw, who commanded the Imperialist forces at Stollhoffen near the left bank of the Rhine, stating that Tallard had made a movement as if intending to cross the Rhine, and urging him to hasten his march towards the lines of Stollhoffen. Marlborough was not diverted by these applications from the prosecution of his grand design. Conscious that the army of Villeroy would be too much reduced to undertake offensive operations, by the detachments which had already been made towards the Rhine, and those which must follow his own march, he halted only a day to quiet the alarms of Auverquerque. To satisfy also the margrave he ordered the troops of Hompesch and Bulow to draw towards Philipsburg, though with private injunctions not to proceed beyond a certain distance. He even exacted a promise to the same effect from Count Wratislaw, who at this juncture arrived at the camp to attend him during the whole campaign.

Marlborough reached the Rhine at Coblenz, where he crossed that river, and then marched along its right bank to Broubach and Mentz. His march, though rapid, was admirably conducted, so as to save the troops from all unnecessary fatigue; ample supplies of provisions were ready, and the most perfect discipline was maintained. By degrees Marlborough obtained more reinforcements from the Dutch and the other confederates, and he also was left more at liberty by them to follow his own course. Indeed, before even a blow was struck, his enterprise had paralysed the enemy, and had materially relieved Austria from the pressure of the war. Villeroy, with his detachment from the French-Flemish army, was completely bewildered by Marlborough's movements; and, unable to divine where it was that the English general meant to strike his blow, wasted away the early part of the summer between Flanders and the Moselle without effecting anything.

French  
generals  
baffled.

Marshal Tallard, who commanded forty-five thousand men at Strasburg, and who had been destined by Louis to march early in the year into Bavaria, thought that Marlborough's march along the Rhine was preliminary to an attack upon Alsace; and the marshal therefore kept his forty-five thousand men back in order to support France in that quarter. Marlborough skilfully encouraged his apprehensions by causing a bridge to be constructed across the Rhine at Philipsburg, and by making the Landgrave of Hesse advance his artillery at Mannheim, as if for a siege of Landau. Meanwhile the Elector of Bavaria and Marshal Marsin, suspecting that Marlborough's design might be what it really proved to be, forbore to press upon the Austrians opposed to them, or to send troops into Hungary; and they kept back so as to secure their communications with France. Thus, when Marlborough, at the beginning of June, left the Rhine and marched for the Danube, the numerous hostile armies were uncombined, and unable to check him.

"With such skill and science had this enterprise been concerted, that at the very moment when it assumed a specific direction, the enemy was no longer enabled to render it abortive. As the march was now to be bent towards the Danube, notice was given for the Prussians, Palatines, and Hessians, who were stationed on the Rhine, to order their march so as to join the main body in its progress. At the same time directions were sent to accelerate the advance of the Danish auxiliaries, who were marching from the Netherlands."

Crossing the river Neckar, Marlborough marched in a south-eastern direction to Mundelshene, where he had his first personal interview with Prince Eugene, who was destined to be his colleague on so many glorious fields. Thence, through a difficult and dangerous country, Marlborough continued his march against the Bavarians, whom he encountered on the 2nd of July, on the heights of the Schullenberg, near Donauwert. Marlborough stormed their entrenched camp, crossed the Danube, took several strong places in Bavaria, and made himself completely master of the

Marlborough and  
Eugene meet.

Elector's dominions, except the fortified cities of Munich and Augsburg. But the Elector's army, though defeated at Donauwert, was still numerous and strong; and at last Marshal Tallard, when thoroughly apprised of the real nature of Marlborough's movement, crossed the Rhine. He was suffered, through the supineness of the German general at Stollhoffen, to march without loss through the Black Forest, and united his powerful army at Biberach near Augsburg, with that of the Elector and the French troops under Marshal Marsin, who had previously been co-operating with the Bavarians. On the other hand, Marlborough recrossed the Danube, and on the 11th of August united his army with the Imperialist forces under Prince Eugene. The combined armies occupied a position near Hochstadt, a little higher up the left bank of the Danube than Donauwert, the scene of Marlborough's recent victory, and almost exactly on the ground where Marshal Villars and the Elector had defeated an Austrian army in the preceding year. The French marshal and the Elector were now in position a little farther to the east, between Blenheim and Lutzingen, and with the little stream of the Nebel between them and the troops of Marlborough and Eugene. The Gallo-Bavarian army consisted of about sixty thousand men, and they had sixty-one pieces of artillery. The army of the Allies was about fifty-six thousand strong, with fifty-two guns.

Although the French army of Italy had been unable to penetrate into Austria, and although the masterly strategy of Marlborough had hitherto warded off the destruction with which the cause of the Allies seemed menaced at the beginning of the campaign, the peril was still most serious. It was absolutely necessary for Marlborough to attack the enemy before Villeroy should be roused into action. There was nothing to stop that general and his army from marching into Franconia, whence the Allies drew their principal supplies; and besides thus distressing them, he might, by marching on and joining his army to those of Tallard and the Elector, form a mass which would overwhelm the force under Marlborough and Eugene. On the other hand, the

The fate  
of Europe  
in balance.

chances of a battle seemed perilous, and the fatal consequences of a defeat were certain. The inferiority of the Allies in point of number was not very great, but still it was not to be disregarded; and the advantage which the enemy seemed to have in the composition of their troops was striking. Tallard and Marsin had forty-five thousand Frenchmen under them, all veterans, and all trained to act together: the Elector's own troops also were good soldiers. Marlborough, like Wellington at Waterloo, headed an army, of which the larger proportion consisted not of English, but of men of many different nations and many different languages. He was also obliged to be the assailant in the action, and thus to expose his troops to comparatively heavy loss at the commencement of the battle, while the enemy would fight under the protection of the villages and lines which they were actively engaged in strengthening. The consequences of a defeat of the confederated army must have broken up the Grand Alliance, and realized the proudest hopes of the French king. Mr. Alison, in his admirable history of the Duke of Marlborough, has truly stated the effects which would have taken place if France had been successful in the war. And, when the position of the Confederates at the time when Blenheim was fought is remembered; when we recollect the exhaustion of Austria, the menacing insurrection of Hungary, the feuds and jealousies of the German princes, the strength and activity of the Jacobite party in England, the imbecility of nearly all the Dutch statesmen of the time, and the weakness of Holland if deprived of her allies, we may adopt his words in speculating on what would have ensued if France had been victorious in the battle, and "if a power, animated by the ambition, guided by the fanaticism, and directed by the ability of that of Louis XIV, had gained the ascendancy in Europe. Beyond all question, a universal despotic dominion would have been established over the bodies, a cruel spiritual thralldom over the minds of men. France and Spain united under Bourbon princes, and in a close family alliance—the empire of Charlemagne with that of Charles V—the power which revoked the

edict of Nantes and perpetrated the massacre of St. Bartholomew, with that which banished the Moriscoes and established the Inquisition, would have proved irresistible, and beyond example destructive to the best interests of mankind.

"The Protestants might have been driven, like the Pagan heathens of old by the son of Pepin, beyond the Elbe; the Stuart race, and with them Romish ascendancy, might have been re-established in England; the fire lighted by Latimer and Ridley might have been extinguished in blood; and the energy breathed by religious freedom into the Anglo-Saxon race might have expired. The destinies of the world would have been changed. Europe, instead of a variety of independent states, whose mutual hostility kept alive courage, while their national rivalry stimulated talent, would have sunk into the slumber attendant on universal dominion. The colonial empire of England would have withered away and perished, as that of Spain has done in the grasp of the Inquisition. The Anglo-Saxon race would have been arrested in its mission to overspread the earth and subdue it. The centralized despotism of the Roman empire would have been renewed on Continental Europe; the chains of Romish tyranny, and with them the general infidelity of France before the Revolution, would have extinguished or perverted thought in the British islands."

Marlborough's words at the council of war, when a battle was resolved on, are remarkable, and they deserve recording. We know them on the authority of his chaplain, Mr. (afterwards Bishop) Hare, who accompanied him throughout the campaign, and in whose journal the biographers of Marlborough have found many of their best materials. Marlborough's words to the officers who remonstrated with him on the seeming temerity of attacking the enemy in their position, were—"I know the danger, yet a battle is absolutely necessary; and I rely on the bravery and discipline of the troops, which will make amends for our disadvantages." In the evening orders were issued for a general engagement, and

received by the army with an alacrity which justified his confidence.

The French and Bavarians were posted behind a little stream called the Nebel, which runs almost from north to south into the Danube immediately in front of the village of Blenheim. The Nebel flows along a little valley, The position of the armies. and the French occupied the rising ground to the west of it. The village of Blenheim was the extreme right of their position, and the village of Lutzingen, about three miles north of Blenheim, formed their left. Beyond Lutzingen are the rugged high grounds of the Godd Berg and Eich Berg, on the skirts of which some detachments were posted so as to secure the Gallo-Bavarian position from being turned on the left flank. The Danube protected their right flank; and it was only in front that they could be attacked. The villages of Blenheim and Lutzingen had been strongly palisadoed and entrenched. Marshal Tallard, who held the chief command, took his station at Blenheim: Prince Maximilian, the Elector, and Marshal Marsin commanded on the left. Tallard garrisoned Blenheim with twenty-six battalions of French infantry and twelve squadrons of French cavalry. Marsin and the Elector had twenty-two battalions of infantry and thirty-six squadrons of cavalry in front of the village of Lutzingen. The centre was occupied by fourteen battalions of infantry, including the celebrated Irish Brigade. These were posted in the little hamlet of Oberglau, which lies somewhat nearer to Lutzingen than to Blenheim. Eighty squadrons of cavalry and seven battalions of foot were ranged between Oberglau and Blenheim. Thus the French position was very strong at each extremity, but was comparatively weak in the centre. Tallard seems to have relied on the swampy state of the part of the valley that reaches from below Oberglau to Blenheim, for preventing any serious attack on this part of his line.

The army of the Allies was formed into two great divisions: the largest being commanded by the Duke in person, and being destined to act against Tallard; while Prince Eugene led the other division, which consisted chiefly of cavalry, and was



intended to oppose the enemy under Marsin and the Elector. As they approached the enemy, Marlborough's troops formed the left and the centre, while Eugene's formed the right of the entire army. Early on the morning of the 13th of August the Allies left their own camp and marched towards the enemy. A thick haze covered the ground, and it was not until the allied right and centre had advanced nearly within cannon-shot of the enemy that Tallard was aware of their approach. He made his preparations with what haste he could, and about eight o'clock a heavy fire of artillery was opened from the French right on the advancing left wing of the British. Marlborough ordered up some of his batteries to reply to it, and while the columns that were to form the allied left and centre deployed, and took up their proper stations in the line, a warm cannonade was kept up by the guns on both sides.

The ground which Eugene's columns had to traverse was peculiarly difficult, especially for the passage of the artillery; and it was nearly mid-day before he could get his troops into line opposite to Lutzingen. During this interval Marlborough ordered divine service to be performed by the chaplains at the head of each regiment; and then rode along the lines, and found both officers and men in the highest spirits, and waiting impatiently for the signal for the attack. At length an aide-de-camp galloped up from the right with the welcome news that Eugene was ready. Marlborough instantly sent Lord Cutts, with a strong brigade of infantry, to assault the village of Blenheim, while he himself led the main body down the eastward slope of the valley of the Nebel, and prepared to effect the passage of the stream.

The assault on Blenheim, though bravely made, was repulsed with severe loss; and Marlborough, finding how strongly that village was garrisoned, desisted from any further attempts to carry it, and bent all his energies to breaking the enemy's line between Blenheim and Oberglau. Some temporary bridges had been prepared, and planks and fascines had been collected; and by the aid of these, and a little stone bridge which crossed the Nebel, near a hamlet called Unterglau, that lay in the



centre of the valley, Marlborough succeeded in getting several squadrons across the Nebel, though it was divided into several branches, and the ground between them was soft, and in places little better than a mere marsh. But the French artillery was not idle. The cannon-balls plunged incessantly among the advancing squadrons of the allies; and bodies of French cavalry rode frequently down from the western ridge, to charge them before they had time to form on the firm ground. It was only by supporting his men by fresh troops, and by bringing up infantry, who checked the advance of the enemy's horse by their steady fire, that Marlborough was able to save his army in this quarter from a repulse, which, following the failure of the attack upon Blenheim, would probably have been fatal to the Allies. By degrees his cavalry struggled over the blood-stained streams; the infantry were also now brought across, so as to keep in check the French troops who held Blenheim, and who, when no longer assailed in front, had begun to attack the Allies on their left with considerable effect.

Marlborough had thus at last succeeded in drawing up the whole left wing of his army beyond the Nebel, and was about to press forward with it, when he was called away to another part of the field by a disaster that had befallen his centre. The Prince of Holstein-Beck had, with eleven Hanoverian battalions, passed the Nebel opposite to Oberglau, when he was charged and utterly routed by the Irish brigade which held that village. The Irish drove the Hanoverians back with heavy slaughter, broke completely through the line of the Allies, and nearly achieved a success as brilliant as that which the same brigade afterwards gained at Fontenoy. But at Blenheim their ardour in pursuit led them too far. Marlborough came up in person, and dashed in upon their exposed flank with some squadrons of British cavalry. The Irish reeled back, and as they strove to regain the height of Oberglau, their column was raked through and through by the fire of three battalions of the Allies, which Marlborough had summoned up from the reserve. Marlborough having re-established

the order and communication of the Allies in this quarter, now, as he returned to his own left wing, sent to learn how his colleague fared against Marsin and the Elector, and to inform Eugene of his own success.

Eugene had hitherto not been equally fortunate. He had made three attacks on the enemy opposed to him, and had been thrice driven back. It was only by his own desperate personal exertions, and the remarkable steadiness of the regiments of Prussian infantry which were under him, that he was able to save his wing from being totally defeated. But it was on the southern part of the battle-field, on the ground which Marlborough had won beyond the Nebel with such difficulty, that the crisis of the battle was to be decided.

Like Hannibal, Marlborough relied principally on his cavalry for achieving his decisive successes, and it was by his cavalry  
The crisis at 5 P.M. that Blenheim, the greatest of his victories, was won. The battle had lasted till five in the afternoon. Marlborough had now eight thousand horsemen drawn up in two lines, and in the most perfect order, for a general attack on the enemy's line along the space between Blenheim and Oberglau. The infantry were drawn up in battalions in their rear, so as to support them if repulsed, and to keep in check the large masses of the French that still occupied the village of Blenheim. Tallard now interlaced his squadrons of cavalry with battalions of infantry; and Marlborough, by a corresponding movement, brought several regiments of infantry, and some pieces of artillery, to his front line, at intervals between the bodies of horse. A little after five, Marlborough commenced the decisive movement, and the allied cavalry, strengthened and supported by foot and guns, advanced slowly from the lower ground near the Nebel up the slope to where the French cavalry, ten thousand strong, awaited them. On riding over the summit of the acclivity, the Allies were received with so hot a fire from the French artillery and small-arms, that at first the cavalry recoiled, but without abandoning the high ground. The guns and the infantry which they had brought with them, maintained the contest with spirit

and effect. The French fire seemed to slacken. Marlborough instantly ordered a charge along the line. The allied cavalry galloped forward at the enemy's squadrons, and the hearts of the French horsemen failed them. Discharging their carbines at an idle distance, they wheeled round and spurred from the field, leaving the nine infantry battalions of their comrades to be ridden down by the torrent of the allied cavalry. The battle was now won. Tallard and Marsin, severed from each other, thought only of retreat. Tallard drew up the squadrons of horse which he had left, in a line extended towards Blenheim, and sent orders to the infantry in that village to leave and join him without delay. But long ere his orders could be obeyed, the conquering squadrons of Marlborough had wheeled to the left and thundered down on the feeble army of the French marshal. Part of the force which Tallard had drawn up for this last effort was driven into the Danube; part fled with their general to the village of Sonderheim, where they were soon surrounded by the victorious Allies and compelled to surrender. Meanwhile, Eugene had renewed his attack upon the Gallo-Bavarian left, and Marsin, finding his colleague utterly routed, and his own right flank uncovered, prepared to retreat. He and the Elector succeeded in withdrawing a considerable part of their troops in tolerable order to Dillingen; but the large body of French who garrisoned Blenheim were left exposed to certain destruction. Marlborough speedily occupied all the outlets from the village with his victorious troops, and then, collecting his artillery round it, he commenced a cannonade that speedily would have destroyed Blenheim itself and all who were in it. After several gallant but unsuccessful attempts to cut their way through the Allies, the French in Blenheim were at length compelled to surrender at discretion; and twenty-four battalions and twelve squadrons, with all their officers, laid down their arms and became the captives of Marlborough.

"Such", says Voltaire, "was the celebrated battle, which the French call the battle of Hochstet, the Germans Plenheim, and the English Blenheim. The conquerors had about five

thousand killed and eight thousand wounded, the greater part being on the side of Prince Eugene. The French army was almost entirely destroyed: of sixty thousand men, so long victorious, there never reassembled more than twenty thousand effective. About twelve thousand killed, fourteen thousand prisoners, all the cannon, a prodigious number of colours and standards, all the tents and equipages, the general of the army, and one thousand two hundred officers of mark, in the power of the conqueror, signalized that day!"

Ulm, Landau, Treves, and Traerbach surrendered to the Allies before the close of the year. Bavaria submitted to the Emperor, and the Hungarians laid down their arms. Germany was completely delivered from France; and the military ascendancy of the arms of the Allies was completely established. Throughout the rest of the war Louis fought only in defence. Blenheim had dissipated for ever his once proud visions of almost universal conquest.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE BATTLE OF PULTOWA, 1709

"Dread Pultowa's day,  
When fortune left the royal Swede,  
Around a slaughtered army lay,  
No more to combat and to bleed.  
The power and fortune of the war  
Had passed to the triumphant Czar."—*Byron*.

Napoleon prophesied at St. Helena, that all Europe would soon be either Cossack or Republican. The fulfilment of the last of these alternatives appeared most probable. But the democratic movements of 1848 were sternly repressed in 1849. The absolute authority of a single ruler, and the austere stillness of martial law, are now paramount in the capitals of the Continent, which lately owned no sovereignty

save the will of the multitude; and where that which the democrat calls his sacred right of insurrection was so loudly asserted and so often fiercely enforced. Many causes have contributed to bring about this reaction, but the most effective and the most permanent have been Russian influence and Russian arms. Russia is now the avowed and acknowledged champion of Monarchy against Democracy;—of constituted authority, however acquired, against revolution and change for whatever purpose desired;—of the imperial supremacy of strong states over their weaker neighbours against all claims for political independence, and all striving for separate nationality.

It was truly stated that "the acquisitions which Russia has made within the [then] last sixty-four years, are equal in extent and importance to the whole empire she had in Europe before that time; that the acquisitions she has made from Sweden are greater than what remains of that ancient kingdom; that her acquisitions from Poland are as large as the whole Austrian empire; that the territory she has wrested from Turkey in Europe is equal to the dominions of Prussia, exclusive of her Rhenish provinces; and that her acquisitions from Turkey in Asia are equal in extent to all the smaller states of Germany, the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, Belgium, and Holland taken together; that the country she has conquered from Persia is about the size of England; that her acquisitions in Tartary have an area equal to Turkey in Europe, Greece, Italy, and Spain. In sixty-four years she has advanced her frontier eight hundred and fifty miles towards Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, and Paris; she has approached four hundred and fifty miles nearer to Constantinople; she has possessed herself of the capital of Poland, and has advanced to within a few miles of the capital of Sweden, from which, when Peter the Great mounted the throne, her frontier was distant three hundred miles. Since that time she has stretched herself forward about one thousand miles towards India, and the same distance towards the capital of Persia."

The rise of  
Russian power.

Such, at that period, had been the recent aggrandizement of Russia; and the events of the last few years, by weakening and disuniting all her European neighbours, have immeasurably augmented the relative superiority of the Muscovite empire over all the other continental powers.

With a population exceeding sixty millions, all implicitly obeying the impulse of a single ruling mind; with a territorial area of six millions and a half of square miles; with a standing army eight hundred thousand strong; with powerful fleets on the Baltic and Black Seas; with a skilful host of diplomatic agents planted in every court and among every tribe; with the confidence which unexpected success creates, and the sagacity which long experience fosters, Russia now grasps with an armed right hand the tangled thread of European politics, and issues her mandate as the arbitress of the movements of the age. Yet a century and a half have hardly elapsed since she was first recognized as a member of the drama of modern European history,—previously to the battle of Pultowa, Russia played no part. Charles V and his great rival, our Elizabeth and her adversary Philip of Spain, the Guises, Sully, Richelieu, Cromwell, De Witt, William of Orange, and the other leading spirits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thought no more about the Muscovite Czar than we now think about the King of Timbuctoo. Even as late as 1735, Lord Bolingbroke, in his admirable *Letters on History*, speaks of the history of the Muscovites as having no relation to the knowledge which a practical English statesman ought to acquire. It may be doubted whether a cabinet council often takes place now in our Foreign Office, without Russia being uppermost in every English statesman's thoughts.

But though Russia remained thus long unheeded amid her snows, there *was* a northern power, the influence of which was acknowledged in the principal European quarrels, and whose good-will was sedulously courted by many of the boldest chiefs and ablest councillors of the leading states. This was Sweden; Sweden, on whose ruins Russia has risen; but whose ascendancy over her semi-

The former  
greatness of  
Sweden.

barbarous neighbours was complete, until the fatal battle that now forms our subject.

As early as 1542 France had sought the alliance of Sweden to aid her in her struggle against Charles V. And the name of Gustavus Adolphus is of itself sufficient to remind us, that in the great contest for religious liberty, of which Germany was for thirty years the arena, it was Sweden that rescued the falling cause of Protestantism; and it was Sweden that principally dictated the remodelling of the European state-system at the peace of Westphalia.

From the proud pre-eminence in which the valour of the "Lion of the North", and of Torstenstön, Bannier, Wrangel, and the other generals of Gustavus, guided by the wisdom of Oxenstiern, had placed Sweden, the defeat of Charles XII at Pultowa hurled her down at once and for ever. Her efforts during the wars of the French revolution to assume a leading part in European politics met with instant discomfiture, and almost provoked derision. But the Sweden, whose sceptre was bequeathed to Christina, and whose alliance Cromwell valued so highly, was a different power from the Sweden of the present day. Finland, Ingria, Livonia, Esthonia, Carelia, and other districts east of the Baltic, then were Swedish provinces; and the possession of Pomerania, Rugen, and Bremen made her an important member of the Germanic empire. These territories are now all reft from her; and the most valuable of them form the staple of her victorious rival's strength. Could she resume them, could the Sweden of 1648 be reconstructed, we should have a first-class Scandinavian state in the North, well qualified to maintain the balance of power, and check the progress of Russia, whose power, indeed, never could have become formidable to Europe save by Sweden becoming weak.

The decisive triumph of Russia over Sweden at Pultowa was therefore all-important to the world, on account of what it overthrew as well as for what it established; and it is the more deeply interesting because it was not merely the crisis of a struggle between two states, but it was

Sclav v.  
German.



a trial of strength between two great races of mankind. We must bear in mind, that while the Swedes, like the English, the Dutch, and others, belong to the Germanic race, the Russians are a Slavonic people. Nations of Slavonian origin have long occupied the greater part of Europe eastward of the Vistula and the populations also of Bohemia, Croatia, Servia, Dalmatia, and other important regions westward of that river are Slavonic. In the long and varied conflicts between them and the Germanic nations that adjoin them, the Germanic race had, before Pultowa, almost always maintained a superiority. With the single but important exception of Poland, no Slavonic state had made any considerable figure in history before the time when Peter the Great won his great victory over the Swedish king. What Russia has done since that time we know and we feel. And some of the wisest and best men of our own age and nation, who have watched with deepest care the annals and the destinies of humanity, have believed that the Slavonic element in the population of Europe has as yet only partially developed its powers: that, while other races of mankind (our own, the Germanic, included) have exhausted their creative energies, and completed their allotted achievements, the Slavonic race has yet a great career to run: and that the narrative of Slavonic ascendancy is the remaining page that will conclude the history of the world.

Let it not be supposed that in thus regarding the primary triumph of Russia over Sweden as a victory of the Slavonic over the Germanic race, we are dealing with matters of mere ethnological pedantry, or with themes of mere speculative curiosity. The fact that Russia is a Slavonic empire is a fact of immense practical influence at the present moment. Half the inhabitants of the Austrian empire are Slavonian. The population of the larger part of Turkey in Europe is of the same race. Silesia, Posen, and other parts of the Prussian dominions are principally Slavonic. And during late years an enthusiastic zeal for blending all Slavonians into one great united Slavonic empire has been growing up in these countries, which, however we may deride its principle, is not the



less real and active, and of which Russia, as the head and champion of the Slavonic race, knows well how to take her advantage.<sup>1</sup>

It is a singular fact that Russia owes her very name to a band of Swedish invaders who conquered her a thousand years ago. They were soon absorbed in the Slavonic population, and every trace of the Swedish character had disappeared in Russia for many centuries before her invasion by Charles XII. She was long the victim and the slave of the Tartars; and for many considerable periods of years the Poles held her in subjugation. Indeed, if we except the expeditions of some of the early Russian chiefs against Byzantium, and the reign of Ivan Vasilovitch, the history of Russia before the time of Peter the Great is one long tale of suffering and degradation.

But whatever may have been the amount of national injuries that she sustained from Swede, from Tartar, or from Pole in the ages of her weakness, she has certainly re-  
Peter the Great.  
 taliated tenfold during the century and a half of her strength.

1 "The idea of Panslavism had a purely literary origin. It was started by Kollar, a Protestant clergyman of the Slavonic congregation at Pesth, in Hungary, who wished to establish a national literature, by circulating all works, written in the various Slavonic dialects, through every country where any of them are spoken. He suggested, that all the Slavonic literati should become acquainted with the sister dialects, so that a Bohemian, or other work, might be read on the shores of the Adriatic, as well as on the banks of the Volga, or any other place where a Slavonic language was spoken; by which means an extensive literature might be created, tending to advance knowledge in all Slavonic countries: and he supported his arguments by observing, that the dialects of ancient Greece differed from each other, like those of his own language, and yet that they formed only one Hellenic literature. The idea of an intellectual union of all those nations naturally led to that of a political one; and the Slavonians, seeing that their numbers amounted to about one-third part of the whole population of Europe, and occupied more than half its territory, began to be sensible that they might claim for themselves a position to which they had not hitherto aspired.

The coming  
 danger—  
 "Panslavism".

"The opinion gained ground; and the question now is, whether the Slavonians can form a nation independent of Russia; or whether they ought to rest satisfied in being part of one great race, with the most powerful member of it as their chief. The latter, indeed, is gaining ground amongst them; and some Poles are disposed to attribute their sufferings to the arbitrary will of the Czar, without extending the blame to the Russians themselves. These begin to think that, if they cannot exist as Poles, the best thing to be done is to rest satisfied with a position in the Slavonic empire, and they hope that, when once they give up the idea of restoring their country, Russia may grant some concessions to their separate nationality.

"The same idea has been put forward by writers in the Russian interest; great efforts are making among other Slavonic people, to induce them to look upon Russia as their future head; and she has already gained considerable influence over the Slavonic populations of Turkey."—*Wilkinson's "Dalmatia"*.

Her rapid transition at the commencement of that period from being the prey of every conqueror to being the oppressor of all with whom she comes into contact, to being the oppressor instead of the oppressed, is almost without a parallel in the history of nations. It was the work of a single ruler; who, himself without education, promoted science and literature among barbaric millions; who gave them fleets, commerce, arts, and arms; who, at Pultowa, taught them to face and beat the previously invincible Swedes; and who made stubborn valour and implicit subordination from that time forth the distinguishing characteristics of the Russian soldiery, which had before his time been a mere disorderly and irresolute rabble.

The career of Philip of Macedon resembles most nearly that of the great Muscovite Czar; but there is this most important difference, that Philip had, while young, received in Southern Greece the best education in all matters of peace and war that the ablest philosophers and generals of the age could bestow. Peter was brought up among barbarians and in barbaric ignorance. He strove to remedy this, when a grown man, by leaving all the temptations to idleness and sensuality which his court offered, and by seeking instruction abroad. He laboured with his own hands as a common artisan in Holland and in England, that he might return and teach his subjects how ships, commerce, and civilization could be acquired. There is a degree of heroism here superior to anything that we know of in the Macedonian king. But Philip's consolidation of the long disunited Macedonian empire,—his raising a people which he found the scorn of their civilized southern neighbours, to be their dread,—his organization of a brave and well-disciplined army, instead of a disorderly militia,—his creation of a maritime force, and his systematic skill in acquiring and improving seaports and arsenals,—his patient tenacity of purpose under reverses,—his personal bravery,—and even his proneness to coarse amusements and pleasures,—all mark him out as the prototype of the imperial founder of the Russian power. In justice, however, to the ancient hero, it ought to be added,

that we find in the history of Philip no examples of that savage cruelty which deforms so grievously the character of Peter the Great.

In considering the effects of the overthrow which the Swedish arms sustained at Pultowa, and in speculating on the probable consequences that would have followed if the invaders had been successful, we must Russia in 1709 and 1812. not only bear in mind the wretched state in which Peter found Russia at his accession, compared with her present grandeur, but we must also keep in view the fact that, at the time when Pultowa was fought, his reforms were yet incomplete and his new institutions immature. He had broken up the old Russia; and the New Russia, which he ultimately created, was still in embryo. Had he been crushed at Pultowa, his mighty schemes would have been buried with him; and (to use the words of Voltaire) "the most extensive empire in the world would have relapsed into the chaos from which it had been so lately taken". It is this fact that makes the repulse of Charles XII the critical point in the fortunes of Russia. The danger which she incurred a century afterwards from her invasion by Napoleon was in reality far less than her peril when Charles attacked her; though the French emperor, as a military genius, was infinitely superior to the Swedish king, and led a host against her, compared with which the armies of Charles seem almost insignificant. But, as Fouché well warned his imperial master, when he vainly endeavoured to dissuade him from his disastrous expedition against the empire of the Czars, the difference between the Russia of 1812 and the Russia of 1709 was greater than the disparity between the power of Charles and the might of Napoleon. "If that heroic king", said Fouché, "had not, like your imperial majesty, half Europe in arms to back him, neither had his opponent, the Czar Peter, 400,000 soldiers and 50,000 Cossacks." The historians, who describe the state of the Muscovite empire when revolutionary and imperial France encountered it, narrate with truth and justice, how "at the epoch of the French Revolution this immense empire, comprehending nearly half of Europe and

Asia within its dominions, inhabited by a patient and indomitable race, ever ready to exchange the luxury and adventure of the south for the hardships and monotony of the north, was daily becoming more formidable to the liberties of Europe. The Russian infantry had then long been celebrated for its immovable firmness. Her immense population, amounting then in Europe alone to nearly thirty-five millions, afforded an inexhaustible supply of men. Her soldiers, inured to heat and cold from their infancy, and actuated by a blind devotion to their Czar, united the steady valour of the English to the impetuous energy of the French troops." So, also, we read how the haughty aggressions of Bonaparte "went to excite a national feeling, from the banks of the Borysthenes to the wall of China, and to unite against him the wild and uncivilized inhabitants of an extended empire, possessed by a love to their religion, their government, and their country, and having a character of stern devotion, which he was incapable of estimating". But the Russia of 1709 had no such forces to oppose to an assailant. Her whole population then was below sixteen millions; and, what is far more important, this population had neither acquired military spirit nor strong nationality; nor was it united in loyal attachment to its ruler.

Peter had wisely abolished the old regular troops of the empire, the Strelitzes; but the forces which he had raised in their stead on a new and foreign plan, and principally officered with foreigners, had, before the Swedish invasion, given no proof that they could be relied on. In numerous encounters with the Swedes, Peter's soldiery had run like sheep before inferior numbers. Great discontent, also, had been excited among all classes of the community by the arbitrary changes which their great emperor introduced, many of which clashed with the most cherished national prejudices of his subjects. A career of victory and prosperity had not yet raised Peter above the reach of that disaffection, nor had superstitious obedience to the Czar yet become the characteristic of the Muscovite mind. The victorious occupation of Moscow by Charles XII would have quelled the Russian nation as effec-

tually as had been the case when Batou Khan, and other ancient invaders, captured the capital of primitive Muscovy. How little such a triumph could effect towards subduing modern Russia, the fate of Napoleon demonstrated at once and for ever.

The character of Charles XII has been a favourite theme with historians, moralists, philosophers, and poets. But it is his military conduct during the campaign in Russia that alone requires comment here. Napoleon, in Charles XII, soldier or general? the memoirs dictated by him at St. Helena, has given us a systematic criticism on that, among other celebrated campaigns, his own Russian campaign included. He labours hard to prove that he himself observed all the true principles of offensive war: and probably his censures of Charles's generalship were rather highly coloured, for the sake of making his own military skill stand out in more favourable relief. Yet, after making all allowances, we must admit the force of Napoleon's strictures on Charles's tactics, and own that his judgment, though severe, is correct, when he pronounces that the Swedish king, unlike his great predecessor Gustavus, knew nothing of the art of war, and was nothing more than a brave and intrepid soldier. Such, however, was not the light in which Charles was regarded by his contemporaries at the commencement of his Russian expedition. His numerous victories, his daring and resolute spirit, combined with the ancient renown of the Swedish arms, then filled all Europe with admiration and anxiety. As Johnson expresses it, his name was then one at which the world grew pale. Even Louis le Grand earnestly solicited his assistance; and our own Marlborough, then in the full career of his victories, was specially sent by the English court to the camp of Charles, to propitiate the hero of the north in favour of the cause of the Allies, and to prevent the Swedish sword from being flung into the scale in the French king's favour. But Charles at that time was solely bent on dethroning the sovereign of Russia, as he had already dethroned the sovereign of Poland, and all Europe fully believed that he would entirely crush the Czar, and dictate

conditions of peace in the Kremlin. Charles himself looked on success as a matter of certainty; and the romantic extravagance of his views was continually increasing. "One year, he thought, would suffice for the conquest of Russia. The court of Rome was next to feel his vengeance, as the pope had dared to oppose the concession of religious liberty to the Silesian Protestants. No enterprise at that time appeared impossible to him. He had even despatched several officers privately into Asia and Egypt, to take plans of the towns, and examine into the strength and resources of those countries."

Napoleon thus epitomizes the earlier operations of Charles's invasion of Russia:—

"The prince set out from his camp at Aldstadt, near Leipsic, in September 1707, at the head of 45,000 men, and traversed Poland; 20,000 men, under Count Lewenhaupt, disembarked at Riga; and 15,000 were in Finland. He was therefore in a condition to have brought together 80,000 of the best troops in the world. He left 10,000 men at Warsaw to guard King Stanislaus, and in January 1708 arrived at Grodno, where he wintered. In June he crossed the forest of Minsk, and presented himself before Borisov; forced the Russian army, which occupied the left bank of the Beresina; defeated 20,000 Russians who were strongly entrenched behind marshes; passed the Borysthene at Mohiloev, and vanquished a corps of 16,000 Muscovites near Smolensko, on the 22nd of September. He was now advanced to the confines of Lithuania, and was about to enter Russia Proper: the Czar, alarmed at his approach, made him proposals of peace. Up to this time all his movements were conformable to rule, and his communications were well secured. He was master of Poland and Riga, and only ten days' march distant from Moscow: and it is probable that he would have reached that capital, had he not quitted the high-road thither, and directed his steps towards the Ukraine, in order to form a junction with Mazeppa, who brought him only 6000 men. By this movement his line of operations, beginning at Sweden, exposed his flank to Russia for a distance of four hundred

Napoleon's view of  
Charles's strategy.

leagues, and he was unable to protect it, or to receive either reinforcements or assistance."

Napoleon severely censures this neglect of one of the great rules of war. He points out that Charles had not organized his war, like Hannibal, on the principle of relinquishing all communications with home, keeping all his forces concentrated, and creating a base of operations in the conquered country. Such had been the bold system of the Carthaginian general; but Charles acted on no such principle, inasmuch as he caused Lewenhaupt, one of his generals who commanded a considerable detachment, and escorted a most important convoy, to follow him at a distance of twelve days' march. By this dislocation of his forces he exposed Lewenhaupt to be overwhelmed separately by the full force of the enemy, and deprived the troops under his own command of the aid which that general's men and stores might have afforded, at the very crisis of the campaign.

Charles loses touch with his communications.

The Czar had collected an army of about a hundred thousand effective men; and though the Swedes, in the beginning of the invasion, were successful in every encounter, the Russian troops were gradually acquiring discipline; and Peter and his officers were learning generalship from their victors, as the Thebans of old learned it from the Spartans. When Lewenhaupt, in the October of 1708, was striving to join Charles in the Ukraine, the Czar suddenly attacked him near the Borysthenes with an overwhelming force of fifty thousand Russians. Lewenhaupt fought bravely for three days, and succeeded in cutting his way through the enemy, with about four thousand of his men, to where Charles awaited him near the river Desna; but upwards of eight thousand Swedes fell in these battles; Lewenhaupt's cannon and ammunition were abandoned; and the whole of his important convoy of provisions, on which Charles and his half-starved troops were relying, fell into the enemy's hands. Charles was compelled to remain in the Ukraine during the winter; but in the spring of 1709 he moved forward towards Moscow, and invested the



fortified town of Pultowa, on the river Vorskla, a place where the Czar had stored up large supplies of provisions and military stores, and which commanded the roads leading towards Moscow. The possession of this place would have given Charles the means of supplying all the wants of his suffering army, and would also have furnished him with a secure base of operations for his advance against the Muscovite capital. The siege was therefore hotly pressed by the Swedes; the garrison resisted obstinately; and the Czar, feeling the importance of saving the town, advanced in June to its relief, at the head of an army from fifty to sixty thousand strong.

Both sovereigns now prepared for the general action, which each perceived to be inevitable, and which each felt would be decisive of his own and of his country's destiny.

Czar Peter  
takes his  
ground.

The Czar, by some masterly manœuvres, crossed the Vorskla, and posted his army on the same side of that river with the besiegers, but a little higher up. The Vorskla falls into the Borysthènes about fifteen leagues below Pultowa, and the Czar arranged his forces in two lines, stretching from one river towards the other; so that if the Swedes attacked him and were repulsed, they would be driven backwards into the acute angle formed by the two streams at their junction. He fortified these lines with several redoubts, lined with heavy artillery; and his troops, both horse and foot, were in the best possible condition, and amply provided with stores and ammunition. Charles's forces were about twenty-four thousand strong. But not more than half of these were Swedes; so much had battle, famine, fatigue, and the deadly frosts of Russia thinned the gallant bands which the Swedish king and Lewenhaupt had led to the Ukraine. The other twelve thousand men under Charles were Cossacks and Wallachians, who had joined him in that country. On hearing that the Czar was about to attack him, he deemed that his dignity required that he himself should be the assailant; and leading his army out of their entrenched lines before the town, he advanced with them against the Russian redoubts.



He had been severely wounded in the foot in a skirmish a few days before, and was borne in a litter along the ranks, into the thick of the fight. Notwithstanding the fearful disparity of numbers and disadvantage of position, the Swedes never showed their ancient valour more nobly than on that dreadful day. Nor do their Cossack and Wallachian allies seem to have been unworthy of fighting side by side with Charles's veterans. Two of the Russian redoubts were actually entered, and the Swedish infantry began to raise the cry of victory. But on the other side, neither general nor soldiers flinched in their duty. The Russian cannonade and musketry were kept up; fresh masses of defenders were poured into the fortifications, and at length the exhausted remnants of the Swedish columns recoiled from the blood-stained redoubts. Then the Czar led the infantry and cavalry of his first line outside the works, drew them up steadily and skilfully, and the action was renewed along the whole fronts of the two armies on the open ground. Each sovereign exposed his life freely in the world-winning battle; and on each side the troops fought obstinately and eagerly under their ruler's eye. It was not till two hours from the commencement of the action that, overpowered by numbers, the hitherto invincible Swedes gave way. All was then hopeless disorder and irreparable rout. Driven downward to where the rivers join, the fugitive Swedes surrendered to their victorious pursuers, or perished in the waters of the Borysthenes. Only a few hundreds swam that river with their king and the Cossack Mazeppa, and escaped into the Turkish territory. Nearly ten thousand lay killed and wounded in the redoubts and on the field of battle.

The battle.  
Rout of  
Swedes.

In the joy of his heart the Czar exclaimed, when the strife was over, "That the son of the morning had fallen from heaven; and that the foundations of St. Petersburg at length stood firm". Even on that battle-field, near the Ukraine, the Russian emperor's first thoughts were of conquests and aggrandizement on the Baltic. The peace of Nystadt, which transferred the fairest provinces of Sweden to Russia, ratified

the judgment of battle which was pronounced at Pultowa. Attacks on Turkey and Persia by Russia commenced almost directly after that victory. And though the Czar failed in his first attempts against the Sultan, the successors of Peter have, one and all, carried on an uniformly aggressive and uniformly successful system of policy against Turkey, and against every other state, Asiatic as well as European, which has had the misfortune of having Russia for a neighbour.

Orators and authors, who have discussed the progress of Russia, have often alluded to the similitude between the

Parallel between  
Russia and  
Roman diplomacy.

modern extension of the Muscovite empire  
and the extension of the Roman dominions  
in ancient times. But attention has scarcely

been drawn to the closeness of the parallel between conquering Russia and conquering Rome, not only in the extent of conquests, but in the means of effecting conquest. The history of Rome during the century and a half which followed the close of the second Punic war, and during which her largest acquisitions of territory were made, should be minutely compared with the history of Russia for the last one hundred and fifty years. The main points of similitude can only be indicated in these pages; but they deserve the fullest consideration. The classic scholar will remember the state-craft of the Roman Senate, which took care in every foreign war to appear in the character of a *Protector*. Thus Rome *protected* the Ætolians, and the Greek cities, against Macedon; she *protected* Bithynia, and other small Asiatic states, against the Syrian kings; she protected Numidia against Carthage; and in numerous other instances assumed the same specious character. But, "Woe to the people whose liberty depends on the continued forbearance of an over-mighty protector". Every state which Rome protected was ultimately subjugated and absorbed by her. And Russia has been the protector of Poland,—the protector of the Crimea,—the protector of Courland,—the protector of Georgia, Immeritia, Mingrelia, the Tcherkessian and Caucasian tribes. She has first protected, and then appropriated them all. She protects Moldavia and

Wallachia. A few years ago she became the protector of Turkey from Mehemet Ali; and since the summer of 1849 she has made herself the protector of Austria.

When the partisans of Russia speak of the disinterestedness with which she withdrew her protecting troops from Constantinople and from Hungary, let us here also mark the ominous exactness of the parallel between her and Rome. While the ancient world yet contained a number of independent states, which might have made a formidable league against Rome if she had alarmed them by openly avowing her ambitious schemes, Rome's favourite policy was seeming disinterestedness and moderation. After her first war against Philip, after that against Antiochus, and many others, victorious Rome promptly withdrew her troops from the territories which they occupied. She affected to employ her arms only for the good of others; but when the favourable moment came, she always found a pretext for marching her legions back into each coveted district, and making it a Roman province. Fear, not moderation, is the only effective check on the ambition of such powers as Ancient Rome and Modern Russia. The amount of that fear depends on the amount of timely vigilance and energy which other states choose to employ against the common enemy of their freedom and national independence.

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## CHAPTER X

### VICTORY OF THE AMERICANS OVER BURGOYNE AT SARATOGA, A.D. 1777

"Even of those great conflicts, in which hundreds of thousands have been engaged and tens of thousands have fallen, none has been more fruitful of results than this surrender of thirty-five hundred fighting-men at Saratoga. It not merely changed the relations of England and the feelings of Europe towards these insurgent colonies, but it has modified, for all times to come, the connexion between every colony and every parent state."—*Lord Mahon*.

Of the four great Powers that now principally rule the political destinies of the world, France and England are the

only two whose influence can be dated back beyond the last century and a half. The third great Power, Russia, was a feeble mass of barbarism before the epoch of Peter the Great; and the very existence of the fourth great Power, as an independent nation, commenced within the memory of living men. By the fourth great Power of the world I mean the mighty commonwealth of the western continent, which now commands the admiration of mankind. That homage is sometimes reluctantly given, and accompanied with suspicion and ill-will. But none can refuse it. All the physical essentials for national strength are undeniably to be found in the geographical position and amplitude of territory which the United States possess: in their almost inexhaustible tracts of fertile, but hitherto untouched soil; in their stately forests, in their mountain-chains and their rivers, their beds of coal, and stores of metallic wealth; in their extensive sea-board along the waters of two oceans, and in their already numerous and rapidly increasing population. And, when we examine the character of this population, no one can look on the fearless energy, the sturdy determination, the aptitude for local self-government, the versatile alacrity, and the unresting spirit of enterprise which characterize the Anglo-Americans, without feeling that he here beholds the true moral elements of progressive might.

Three-quarters of a century have not yet passed away since the United States ceased to be mere dependencies of England. And even if we date their origin from the period when the first permanent European settlements, out of which they grew, were made on the western coast of the North Atlantic, the increase of their strength is unparalleled, either in rapidity or extent.

The ancient Roman boasted, with reason, of the growth of Rome from humble beginnings to the greatest magnitude which the world had then ever witnessed. But the citizen of the United States is still more justly entitled to claim this praise. In two centuries and a half his country has acquired ampler dominion than the Roman gained in ten. And, even if we credit the legend of the band of shepherds and outlaws with

which Romulus is said to have colonized the Seven Hills, we find not there so small a germ of future greatness, as we find in the group of a hundred and five ill-chosen and disunited emigrants who founded Jamestown in 1607, or in the scanty band of the Pilgrim Fathers, who, a few years later, moored their bark on the wild and rock-bound coast of the wilderness that was to become New England.

Nothing is more calculated to impress the mind with a sense of the rapidity with which the resources of the American republic advance, than the difficulty which the historical enquirer finds in ascertaining their precise amount. If he consults the most recent

The vast territory of the United States.

works, and those written by the ablest investigators of the subject, he finds in them admiring comments on the change which the last few years, before those books were written, had made; but when he turns to apply the estimates in those books to the present moment, he finds them wholly inadequate. Before a book on the subject of the United States has lost its novelty, those states have outgrown the description which it contains. The celebrated work of the French statesman, De Tocqueville, appeared in the year 1835. In the passage which I am about to quote, it will be seen that he predicts the constant increase of the Anglo-American power, but he looks on the Rocky Mountains as their extreme western limit for many years to come. He had evidently no expectation of himself seeing that power dominant along the Pacific as well as along the Atlantic coast. He says:—

“The distance from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico extends from the 47th to the 30th degree of latitude, a distance of more than 1200 miles as the bird flies. The frontier of the United States winds along the whole of this immense line; sometimes falling within its limits, but more frequently extending far beyond it into the waste. It has been calculated that the Whites advance every year a mean distance of seventeen miles along the whole of this vast boundary. Obstacles, such as an unproductive district, a lake, or an Indian nation unexpectedly encountered, are sometimes met with. The advance-

ing column then halts for a while; its two extremities fall back upon themselves, and as soon as they are reunited they proceed onwards. This gradual and continuous progress of the European race towards the Rocky Mountains has the solemnity of a Providential event: it is like a deluge of men rising unabatedly, and daily driven onwards by the hand of God.

"Within this first line of conquering settlers towns are built, and vast estates founded. In 1790 there were only a few thousands pioneers sprinkled along the valleys of the Mississippi: and at the present day these valleys contain as many inhabitants as were to be found in the whole Union in 1790. Their population amounts to nearly four millions. The city of Washington was founded in 1800, in the very centre of the Union; but such are the changes which have taken place, that it now stands at one of the extremities; and the delegates of the most remote Western States are already obliged to perform a journey as long as that from Vienna to Paris.

"It must not, then, be imagined that the impulse of the British race in the New World can be arrested. The dismemberment of the Union, and the hostilities which might ensue, the abolition of republican institutions, and the tyrannical government which might succeed it, may retard this impulse, but they cannot prevent it from ultimately fulfilling the destinies to which that race is reserved. No power upon earth can close upon the emigrants that fertile wilderness, which offers resources to all industry, and a refuge from all want. Future events, of whatever nature they may be, will not deprive the Americans of their climate or of their inland seas, or of their great rivers, or of their exuberant soil. Nor will bad laws, revolutions, and anarchy be able to obliterate that love of prosperity and that spirit of enterprise which seem to be the distinctive characteristics of their race, or to extinguish that knowledge which guides them on their way.

"Thus, in the midst of the uncertain future, one event at least is sure. At a period which may be said to be near (for we are speaking of the life of a nation), the Anglo-Americans

will alone cover the immense space contained between the Polar regions and the Tropics, extending from the coast of the Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific Ocean; the territory which will probably be occupied by the Anglo-Americans at some future time may be computed to equal three-quarters of Europe in extent. The climate of the Union is upon the whole preferable to that of Europe, and its natural advantages are not less great; it is therefore evident that its population will at some future time be proportionate to our own. Europe, divided as it is between so many different nations, and torn as it has been by incessant wars and the barbarous manners of the Middle Ages, has notwithstanding attained a population of 410 inhabitants to the square league. What cause can prevent the United States from having as numerous a population in time?

What the future has in store.

"The time will therefore come when one hundred and fifty millions of men will be living in North America, equal in condition, the progeny of one race, owing their origin to the same cause, and preserving the same civilization, the same language, the same religion, the same habits, the same manners, and imbued with the same opinions, propagated under the same forms. The rest is uncertain, but this is certain; and it is a fact new to the world, a fact fraught with such portentous consequences as to baffle the efforts even of the imagination."

Let us turn from the French statesman writing in 1835, to an English statesman, who is justly regarded as the highest authority on all statistical subjects, and who described the United States ten years later. Macgregor tells us—

"The States which, on the ratification of independence, formed the American Republican Union, were thirteen, viz.: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

"The foregoing thirteen states (*the whole inhabited territory of which, with the exception of a few small settlements, was confined to the region extending between the Alleghany mountains and the*



*Atlantic*) were those which existed at the period when they became an acknowledged separate and independent federal sovereign power. The thirteen stripes of the standard or flag of the United States continue to represent the original number. The stars have multiplied to twenty-six, according as the number of States have increased."

We may add that the population of the States, when they declared their independence, was about two millions and a half; it is now seventy millions.

I have quoted Macgregor, not only on account of the clear and full view which he gives of the progress of America to the date when he wrote, but because his description may be contrasted with what the United States have become even since his book appeared. Only three years after the time when Macgregor thus wrote, the American President truly stated:—

"Within less than four years the annexation of Texas to the Union has been consummated; all conflicting title to the

Extension  
of U.S.  
to the west.

Oregon territory, south of the 49th degree of north latitude, adjusted; and New Mexico and Upper California have been acquired by treaty. The area

of these several territories contains 1,193,061 square miles, or 763,559,040 acres; while the area of the remaining twenty-nine States, and the territory not yet organized into States east of the Rocky Mountains, contains 2,059,513 square miles, or 1,318,126,058 acres. These estimates show that the territories recently acquired, and over which our exclusive jurisdiction and dominion have been extended, constitute a country more than half as large as all that which was held by the United States before their acquisition. If Oregon be excluded from the estimate, there will still remain within the limits of Texas, New Mexico, and California, 851,598 square miles, or 545,012,720 acres; being an addition equal to more than one-third of all the territory owned by the United States before their acquisition; and, including Oregon, nearly as great an extent of territory as the whole of Europe, Russia only excepted. *The Mississippi, so lately the frontier of our country, is now only its centre.* With the addition of the late acquisitions,



the United States are now estimated to be nearly as large as the whole of Europe. The extent of the sea-coast of Texas, on the Gulf of Mexico, is upwards of 400 miles; of the coast of Upper California, on the Pacific, of 970 miles; and of Oregon, including the Straits of Fuca, of 650 miles; *making the whole extent of sea-coast on the Pacific 1620 miles*; and the whole extent on both the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico, 2020 miles. The length of the coast on the Atlantic, from the northern limits of the United States, round the Capes of Florida to the Sabine on the eastern boundary of Texas, is estimated to be 3100 miles, so that the addition of sea-coast, including Oregon, is very nearly two-thirds as great as all we possessed before; and, excluding Oregon, is an addition of 1370 miles; being nearly equal to one-half of the extent of coast which we possessed before these acquisitions. We have now three great maritime fronts—on the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific; making, in the whole, an extent of sea-coast exceeding 5000 miles. This is the extent of the sea-coast of the United States, not including bays, sounds, and small irregularities of the main shore, and of the sea islands. If these be included, the length of the shore line of coast, as estimated by the superintendent of the Coast Survey in his report, would be 33,063 miles."

An Englishman may look, and ought to look, on the growing grandeur of the Americans with no small degree of generous sympathy and satisfaction. They, like ourselves, are members of the great Anglo-Saxon nation "whose race and language are now over-running the world from one end of it to the other". And whatever differences of form of government may exist between us and them; whatever reminiscences of the days when, though brethren, we strove together, may rankle in the minds of us, the defeated party, we should cherish the bonds of common nationality that still exist between us. We should remember, as the Athenians remembered of the Spartans at a season of jealousy and temptation, that our race is one, being of the same blood, speaking the same language, having an

What if Britain  
had retained  
America?

essential resemblance in our institutions and usages, and worshipping in the temples of the same God. All this may and should be borne in mind. And yet an Englishman can hardly watch the progress of America, without the regretful thought that America once was English, and that, but for the folly of our rulers, she might be English still. It is true that the commerce between the two countries has largely and beneficially increased; but this is no proof that the increase would not have been still greater had the States remained integral portions of the same great empire. By giving a fair and just participation in political rights these, "the fairest possessions" of the British crown, might have been preserved to it. "This ancient and most noble monarchy" would not have been dismembered; nor should we see that which ought to be the right arm of our strength, now menacing us in every political crisis, as the most formidable rival of our commercial and maritime ascendancy.

The war which rent away the North American colonies of England is, of all subjects in history, the most painful for an Englishman to dwell on. It was commenced and carried on by the British ministry in iniquity and folly, and it was concluded in disaster and shame. But the contemplation of it cannot be evaded by the historian, however much it may be abhorred. Nor can any military event be said to have exercised more important influence on the future fortunes of mankind than the complete defeat of Burgoyne's expedition in 1777; a defeat which rescued the revolted colonists from certain subjection; and which, by inducing the courts of France and Spain to attack England in their behalf, ensured the independence of the United States, and the formation of that trans-Atlantic power which, not only America, but both Europe and Asia, now see and feel.

Still, in proceeding to describe this "decisive battle of the world", a very brief recapitulation of the earlier events of the war may be sufficient; nor shall I linger unnecessarily on a painful theme.

The five northern colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut,

Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont, usually classed together as the New England colonies, were the strongholds of the insurrection against the mother-country. Northern States feeling. The feeling of resistance was less vehement and general in the central settlement of New York; and still less so in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the other colonies of the south, although everywhere it was formidably active. Virginia should, perhaps, be particularized for the zeal which its leading men displayed in the American cause; but it was among the descendants of the stern Puritans that the spirit of Cromwell and Vane breathed in all its fervour; it was from the New Englanders that the first armed opposition to the British crown had been offered; and it was by them that the most stubborn determination to fight to the last, rather than waive a single right or privilege, had been displayed. In 1775 they had succeeded in forcing the British troops to evacuate Boston; and the events of 1776 had made New York (which the royalists captured in that year) the principal basis of operations for the armies of the mother-country.

A glance at the map will show that the Hudson river, which falls into the Atlantic at New York, runs down from the north at the back of the New England States, forming an angle of about forty-five degrees with the line of The river Hudson as the key. the coast of the Atlantic, along which the New England states are situate. Northward of the Hudson we see a small chain of lakes communicating with the Canadian frontier. It is necessary to attend closely to these geographical points, in order to understand the plan of the operations which the English attempted in 1777, and which the battle of Saratoga defeated.

The English had a considerable force in Canada; and in 1776 had completely repulsed an attack which the Americans had made upon that province. The British ministry resolved to avail themselves, in the next year, of the advantage which the occupation of Canada gave them, not merely for the purpose of defence, but for the purpose of striking a vigorous and The proposed campaign: line of advance.

crushing blow against the revolted colonies. With this view the army in Canada was largely reinforced. Seven thousand veteran troops were sent out from England, with a corps of artillery abundantly supplied, and led by select and experienced officers. Large quantities of military stores were also furnished for the equipment of the Canadian volunteers who were expected to join the expedition. It was intended that the force thus collected should march southward by the line of the lakes, and thence along the banks of the Hudson river. The British army in New York (or a large detachment of it) was to make a simultaneous movement northward, up the line of the Hudson, and the two expeditions were to unite at Albany, a town on that river. By these operations all communication between the northern colonies and those of the centre and south would be cut off. An irresistible force would be concentrated, so as to crush all further opposition in New England; and when this was done, it was believed that the other colonies would speedily submit. The Americans had no troops in the field that seemed able to baffle these movements. Their principal army, under Washington, was occupied in watching over Pennsylvania and the south. At any rate it was believed that, in order to oppose the plan intended for the new campaign, the insurgents must risk a pitched battle, in which the superiority of the royalists, in numbers, in discipline, and in equipment, seemed to promise to the latter a crowning victory. Without question the plan was ably formed; and had the success of the execution been equal to the ingenuity of the design, the re-conquest or submission of the thirteen United States must, in all human probability, have followed, and the independence which they proclaimed in 1776 would have been extinguished before it existed a second year. No European power had as yet come forward to aid America. It is true that England was generally regarded with jealousy and ill-will, and was thought to have acquired, at the treaty of Paris, a preponderance of dominion which was perilous to the balance of power; but though many were willing to wound, none had yet ventured to strike; and

America, if defeated in 1777, would have been suffered to fall unaided.

Burgoyne had gained celebrity by some bold and dashing exploits in Portugal during the last war; he was personally as brave an officer as ever headed British troops; he had considerable skill as a tactician; and his general intellectual abilities and acquirements were of a high order. He had several very able and experienced officers under him, among whom were Major-General Phillips and Brigadier-General Fraser. His regular troops amounted, exclusively of the corps of artillery, to about seven thousand two hundred men, rank and file. Nearly half of these were Germans. He had also an auxiliary force of from two to three thousand Canadians. He summoned the warriors of several tribes of the Red Indians near the western lakes to join his army. Much eloquence was poured forth, both in America and in England, in denouncing the use of these savage auxiliaries. Yet Burgoyne seems to have done no more than Montcalm, Wolfe, and other French, American, and English generals had done before him. But, in truth, the lawless ferocity of the Indians, their unskilfulness in regular action, and the utter impossibility of bringing them under any discipline, made their services of little or no value in times of difficulty: while the indignation which their outrages inspired went far to rouse the whole population of the invaded districts into active hostilities against Burgoyne's force.

Burgoyne assembled his troops and confederates near the river Bouquet, on the west side of Lake Champlain. He then, on the 21st of June, 1777, gave his red Allies a war-feast, and harangued them on the necessity of abstaining from their usual cruel practices against unarmed people and prisoners. At the same time he published a pompous manifesto to the Americans, in which he threatened the refractory with all the horrors of war, Indian as well as European. The army proceeded by water to Crown Point, a fortification which the Americans held at the northern extremity of the inlet by which the water from Lake George is conveyed to Lake Cham-

Indians in  
the army.

British take  
Ticonderoga.

plain. He landed here without opposition; but the reduction of Ticonderoga, a fortification about twelve miles to the south of Crown Point, was a more serious matter, and was supposed to be the critical part of the expedition. Ticonderoga commanded the passage along the lakes, and was considered to be the key to the route which Burgoyne wished to follow. The English had been repulsed in an attack on it in the war with the French in 1758 with severe loss. But Burgoyne now invested it with great skill; and the American general, St. Clair, who had only an ill-equipped army of about three thousand men, evacuated it on the 5th of July. It seems evident that a different course would have caused the destruction or capture of his whole army, which, weak as it was, was the chief force then in the field for the protection of the New England states. When censured by some of his countrymen for abandoning Ticonderoga, St. Clair truly replied, "that he had lost a post, but saved a province". Burgoyne's troops pursued the retiring Americans, gained several advantages over them, and took a large part of their artillery and military stores.

The loss of the British in these engagements was trifling. The army moved southward along Lake George to Skenesborough; and thence slowly, and with great difficulty, across a broken country, full of creeks and marshes, and clogged by the enemy with felled trees and other obstacles, to Fort Edward, on the Hudson river, the American troops continuing to retire before them.

Burgoyne reached the left bank of the Hudson river on the 30th of July. Hitherto he had overcome every difficulty which the enemy and the nature of the country <sup>High British hopes.</sup> had placed in his way. His army was in excellent order and in the highest spirits; and the peril of the expedition seemed over, when they were once on the bank of the river which was to be the channel of communication between them and the British army in the south. But their feelings, and those of the English nation in general when their successes were announced, may best be learned from a contemporary

writer. Burke, in the *Annual Register* for 1777, describes them thus:—

“Such was the rapid torrent of success which swept everything away before the northern army in its onset. It is not to be wondered at if both officers and private men were highly elated with their good fortune, and deemed that and their prowess to be irresistible, if they regarded their enemy with the greatest contempt, considered their own toils to be nearly at an end, Albany to be already in their hands, and the reduction of the northern provinces to be rather a matter of some time than an arduous task full of difficulty and danger.

“At home, the joy and exultation was extreme, not only at court, but with all those who hoped or wished the unqualified subjugation and unconditional submission of the colonies. The loss in reputation was greater to the Americans, and capable of more fatal consequences, than even that of ground, of posts, of artillery, or of men. All the contemptuous and most degrading charges which had been made by their enemies, of their wanting the resolution and abilities of men, even in their defence of whatever was dear to them, were now repeated and believed. Those who still regarded them as men, and who had not yet lost all affection to them as brethren, who also retained hopes that a happy reconciliation upon constitutional principles, without sacrificing the dignity or the just authority of government on the one side, or a dereliction of the rights of freemen on the other, was not even now impossible, notwithstanding their favourable dispositions in general, could not help feeling upon this occasion that the Americans sunk not a little in their estimation. It was not difficult to diffuse an opinion that the war in effect was over, and that any further resistance could serve only to render the terms of their submission the worse. Such were some of the immediate effects of the loss of those grand keys of North America, Ticonderoga and the lakes.”

The astonishment and alarm which these events produced among the Americans were naturally great; but in the midst of their disasters none of the colonists showed any disposition



to submit. The local governments of the New England States, as well as the Congress, acted with vigour and firmness in their efforts to repel the enemy. General Gates was

Gates as  
American  
general.

sent to take command of the army at Saratoga; and Arnold, a favourite leader of the Americans, was despatched by Washington to act under him, with reinforcements of troops and guns from the main American army. Burgoyne's employment of the Indians now produced the worst possible effects. Though he laboured hard to check the atrocities which they were accustomed to commit, he could not prevent the occurrence of many barbarous outrages repugnant both to the feelings of humanity and to the laws of civilized warfare. The American commanders took care that the reports of these excesses should be circulated far and wide, well knowing that they would make the stern New Englanders not droop, but rage. Such was their effect; and though, when each man looked upon his wife, his children, his sisters, or his aged parents, the thought of the merciless Indian "thirsting for the blood of man, woman, and child", of "the cannibal savage torturing, murdering, roasting, and eating the mangled victims of his barbarous battles", might raise terror in the bravest breasts, this very terror produced a directly contrary effect to causing submission to the royal army. It was seen that the few friends of the royal cause, as well as its enemies, were liable to be the victims of the indiscriminate rage of the savages; and thus "the inhabitants of the open and frontier countries had no choice of acting: they had no means of security left, but by abandoning their habitations and taking up arms. Every man saw the necessity of becoming a temporary soldier, not only for his own security, but for the protection and defence of those connections which are dearer than life itself. Thus an army was poured forth by the woods, mountains, and marshes, which in this part were thickly sown with plantations and villages. The Americans recalled their courage; and when their regular army seemed to be entirely wasted, the spirit of the country produced a much greater and more formidable force.



While resolute recruits, accustomed to the use of firearms, and all partially trained by service in the provincial militias, were thus flocking to the standard of Gates and Arnold at Saratoga, and while Burgoyne was engaged at Fort Edward in providing the means for the further advance of his army through the intricate and hostile country that still lay before him, two events occurred, in each of which the British sustained loss and the Americans obtained advantage, the moral effects of which were even more important than the immediate result of the encounters. When Burgoyne left Canada, General St. Leger was detached from that province, with a mixed force of about one thousand men and some light field-pieces, across Lake Ontario against Fort Stanwix, which the Americans held. After capturing this he was to march along the Mohawk river to its confluence with the Hudson, between Saratoga and Albany, where his force and that of Burgoyne were to unite. But, after some successes, St. Leger was obliged to retreat, and to abandon his tents and large quantities of stores to the garrison. At the very time that General Burgoyne heard of this disaster he experienced one still more severe in the defeat of Colonel Baum with a large detachment of German troops at Benington, whither Burgoyne had sent them for the purpose of capturing some magazines of provisions, of which the British army stood greatly in need. The Americans, augmented by continual accessions of strength, succeeded, after many attacks, in breaking this corps, which fled into the woods and left its commander mortally wounded on the field: they then marched against a force of five hundred grenadiers and light infantry, which was advancing to Colonel Baum's assistance under Lieutenant-Colonel Breyman, who, after a gallant resistance, was obliged to retreat on the main army. The British loss in these two actions exceeded six hundred men: and a party of American loyalists, on their way to join the army, having attached themselves to Colonel Baum's corps, were destroyed with it.

British misfortunes in the rear.

Notwithstanding these reverses, which added greatly to the

spirit and numbers of the American forces, Burgoyne determined to advance. It was impossible any longer to keep up his communications with Canada by way of the lakes, so as to supply his army on his southward march; but having by unremitting exertions collected provisions for thirty days, he crossed the Hudson by means of a bridge of rafts, and, marching a short distance along its western bank, he encamped on the 14th of September on the heights of SARATOGA, about sixteen miles from Albany. The Americans had fallen back from Saratoga, and were now strongly posted near Stillwater, about half-way between Saratoga and Albany, and showed a determination to recede no farther.

Meanwhile Lord Howe, with the bulk of the British army that had lain at New York, had sailed away to the Delaware,

and there commenced a campaign against Washington, in which the English general took Philadelphia, and gained other showy but unprofitable successes.

But Sir Henry Clinton, a brave and skilful officer, was left with a considerable force at New York; and he undertook the task of moving up the Hudson to co-operate with Burgoyne. Clinton was obliged for this purpose to wait for reinforcements which had been promised from England, and these did not arrive till September. As soon as he received them, Clinton embarked about 3000 of his men on a flotilla, convoyed by some ships of war under Commander Hotham, and proceeded to force his way up the river, but it was long before he was able to open any communication with Burgoyne.

The country between Burgoyne's position at Saratoga and that of the Americans at Stillwater was rugged, and seamed with creeks and water-courses; but after great labour in making bridges and temporary causeways, the British army moved forward. About four miles from Saratoga, on the afternoon of the 19th of September, a sharp encounter took place between part of the English right wing under Burgoyne himself, and a strong body of the enemy under Gates and Arnold. The conflict lasted till sunset. The British remained masters of the field; but the loss on each side was nearly

equal (from five hundred to six hundred men); and the spirits of the Americans were greatly raised by having withstood the best regular troops of the English army. Burgoyne now halted again, and strengthened his position by field-works and redoubts; and the Americans also improved their defences. The two armies remained nearly within cannon-shot of each other for a considerable time, during which Burgoyne was anxiously looking for intelligence of the promised expedition from New York, which, according to the original plan, ought by this time to have been approaching Albany from the south. At last a messenger from Clinton made his way, with great difficulty, to Burgoyne's camp, and brought the information that Clinton was on his way up the Hudson to attack the American forts which barred the passage up that river to Albany. Burgoyne, in reply, on the 30th of September, urged Clinton to attack the forts as speedily as possible, stating that the effect of such an attack, or even the semblance of it, would be to move the American army from its position before his own troops. By another messenger, who reached Clinton on the 5th of October, Burgoyne informed his brother general that he had lost his communications with Canada, but had provisions which would last him till the 20th. Burgoyne described himself as strongly posted, and stated that though the Americans in front of him were strongly posted also, he made no doubt of being able to force them, and making his way to Albany; but that he doubted whether he could subsist there, as the country was drained of provisions. He wished Clinton to meet him there, and to keep open a communication with New York.

Burgoyne had over-estimated his resources, and in the very beginning of October found difficulty and distress pressing him hard.

The Indians and Canadians began to desert him; while, on the other hand, Gates's army was continually reinforced by fresh bodies of the militia. An expeditionary force was detached by the Americans, which made a bold, though unsuccessful attempt to retake Ticonderoga.

Burgoyne hard  
pressed.

And finding the number and spirit of the enemy to increase daily, and his own stores of provisions to diminish, Burgoyne determined on attacking the Americans in front of him, and, by dislodging them from their position, to gain the means of moving upon Albany, or at least of relieving his troops from the straitened position in which they were cooped up.

Burgoyne's force was now reduced to less than 6000 men. The right of his camp was on some high ground a little to the west of the river; thence his entrenchments extended along the lower ground to the bank of the Hudson, the line of their front being nearly at a right angle with the course of the stream. The lines were fortified with redoubts and field-works, and on a height on the flank of the extreme right a strong redoubt was reared, and entrenchments, in a horse-shoe form, thrown up. The Hessians, under Colonel Breyman, were stationed here, forming a flank defence to Burgoyne's main army. The numerical force of the Americans was now greater than the British, even in regular troops, and the numbers of the militia and volunteers which had joined Gates and Arnold were greater still.

General Lincoln with 2000 New England troops had reached the American camp on the 29th of September. Gates gave him the command of the right wing, and took in person the command of the left wing, which was composed of two brigades under Generals Poor and Leonard, of Colonel Morgan's rifle corps, and part of the fresh New England Militia. The whole of the American lines had been ably fortified under the direction of the celebrated Polish general Kosciusko, who was now serving as a volunteer in Gates's army. The right of the American position, that is to say the part of it nearest to the river, was too strong to be assailed with any prospect of success, and Burgoyne therefore determined to endeavour to force their left. For this purpose he formed a column of 1500 regular troops, with two twelve-pounders, two howitzers, and six six-pounders. He headed this in person, having Generals Phillips, Reidesel, and Fraser under him. The

enemy's force immediately in front of his lines was so strong that he dared not weaken the troops who guarded them, by detaching any more to strengthen his column of attack.

It was on the 7th of October that Burgoyne led his column forward; and on the preceding day, the 6th, Clinton had successfully executed a brilliant enterprise against the two American forts which barred his progress up the Hudson. He had captured them both, with severe loss to the American forces opposed to him; he had destroyed the fleet which the Americans had been forming on the Hudson, under the protection of their forts; and the upward river was laid open to his squadron. He had also, with admirable skill and industry, collected in small vessels, such as could float within a few miles of Albany, provisions sufficient to supply Burgoyne's army for six months. He was now only a hundred and fifty-six miles distant from Burgoyne; and a detachment of 1700 men actually advanced within forty miles of Albany. Unfortunately Burgoyne and Clinton were each ignorant of the other's movements; but if Burgoyne had won his battle on the 7th, he must on advancing have soon learned the tidings of Clinton's success, and Clinton would have heard of his. A junction would soon have been made of the two victorious armies, and the great objects of the campaign might yet have been accomplished. All depended on the fortune of the column with which Burgoyne, on the eventful 7th of October, 1777, advanced against the American position. There were brave men, both English and German, in its ranks; and in particular it comprised one of the best bodies of grenadiers in the British service.

Burgoyne pushed forward some bodies of irregular troops to distract the enemy's attention; and led his column to within three-quarters of a mile from the left of Gates's camp, and then deployed his men into line. The grenadiers under Major Ackland, and the artillery under Major Williams, were drawn up on the left; a corps of Germans under General

Position of Clinton.  
"Near and yet so far."

Reidesel, and some British troops under General Phillips, were in the centre; and the English light infantry and the 24th Regiment, under Lord Balcarres and General Fraser, were on the right. But Gates did not wait to be attacked; and directly the British line was formed and began to advance, the American general, with admirable skill, caused General Poor's brigade of New York and New Hampshire troops, and part of General Leonard's brigade, to make a sudden and vehement rush against its left, and at the same time sent Colonel Morgan, with his rifle corps and other troops, amounting to 1500, to turn the right of the English. The grenadiers under Ackland sustained the charge of superior numbers nobly. But Gates sent more Americans forward, and in a few minutes the action became general along the centre, so as to prevent the Germans from detaching any help to the grenadiers. Morgan, with his riflemen, was now pressing Lord Balcarres and General Fraser hard, and fresh masses of the enemy were observed advancing from their extreme left, with the evident intention of forcing the British right, and cutting off its retreat. The English light infantry and the 24th now fell back, and formed an oblique second line, which enabled them to baffle this manœuvre, and also to succour their comrades in the left wing, the gallant grenadiers, who were overpowered by superior numbers, and, but for this aid, must have been cut to pieces.

The contest now was fiercely maintained on both sides. The English cannon were repeatedly taken and retaken; but when the grenadiers near them were forced back by the weight of superior numbers, one of the guns was permanently captured by the Americans, and turned upon the English. Major Williams and Major Ackland were both made prisoners, and in this part of the field the advantage of the Americans was decided. The British centre still held its ground; but now it was that the American general Arnold appeared upon the scene, and did more for his countrymen than whole battalions could have effected. Arnold, when the decisive engagement of the 7th of October commenced,

Death of  
General  
Fraser.

had been deprived of his command by Gates, in consequence of a quarrel between them about the action of the 19th of September. He had listened for a short time in the American camp to the thunder of the battle, in which he had no military right to take part, either as commander or as combatant. But his excited spirit could not long endure such a state of inaction. He called for his horse, a powerful brown charger, and, springing on it, galloped furiously to where the fight seemed to be the thickest. Gates saw him, and sent an aide-de-camp to recall him; but Arnold spurred far in advance, and placed himself at the head of three regiments which had formerly been under him, and which welcomed their old commander with joyous cheers. He led them instantly upon the British centre; and then, galloping along the American line, he issued orders for a renewed and a closer attack, which were obeyed with alacrity, Arnold himself setting the example of the most daring personal bravery, and charging more than once, sword in hand, into the English ranks. On the British side the officers did their duty nobly; but General Fraser was the most eminent of them all, restoring order wherever the line began to waver, and infusing fresh courage into his men by voice and example. Mounted on an iron-gray charger, and dressed in the full uniform of a general officer, he was conspicuous to foes as well as to friends. The American Colonel Morgan thought that the fate of the battle rested on this gallant man's life, and, calling several of his best marksmen round him, pointed Fraser out, and said: "That officer is General Fraser; I admire him, but he must die. Our victory depends on it. Take your stations in that clump of bushes, and do your duty." Within five minutes Fraser fell mortally wounded, and was carried to the British camp by two grenadiers. Just previously to his being struck by the fatal bullet, one rifle-ball had cut the crupper of his saddle, and another had passed through his horse's mane close behind the ears. His aide-de-camp had noticed this, and said: "It is evident that you are marked out for particular aim; would it not be prudent for you to retire from this place?" Fraser



replied: "My duty forbids me to fly from danger"; and the next moment he fell.

Burgoyne's whole force was now compelled to retreat towards their camp; the left and centre were in complete disorder, but the light infantry and the 24th checked the fury of the assailants, and the remains of the column with great difficulty effected their return to their camp; leaving six of their cannons in the possession of the enemy, and great numbers of killed and wounded on the field, and especially a large proportion of the artillerymen, who had stood to their guns until shot down or bayoneted beside them by the advancing Americans.

Burgoyne's column had been defeated, but the action was not yet over. The English had scarcely entered the camp, when the Americans, pursuing their success, assaulted it in several places with remarkable impetuosity, rushing in upon the entrenchments and redoubts through a severe fire of grape-shot and musketry. Arnold especially, who on this day appeared maddened with the thirst of combat and carnage, urged on the attack against a part of the entrenchments which was occupied by the light infantry under Lord Balcarres. But the English received him with vigour and spirit. The struggle here was obstinate and sanguinary. At length, as it grew towards evening, Arnold, having forced all obstacles, entered the works with some of the most fearless of his followers. But in this critical moment of glory and danger he received a painful wound in the same leg which had already been injured at the assault on Quebec. To his bitter regret he was obliged to be carried back. His party still continued the attack, but the English also continued their obstinate resistance, and at last night fell, and the assailants withdrew from this quarter of the British entrenchments. But in another part the attack had been more successful. A body of the Americans, under Colonel Brooke, forced their way in through a part of the horse-shoe entrenchments on the extreme right, which was defended by the Hessian reserve under Colonel Breyman. The Germans resisted well, and

Americans  
attack the  
British camp.



Breyman died in defence of his post; but the Americans made good the ground which they had won, and captured baggage, tents, artillery, and a store of ammunition, which they were greatly in need of. They had, by establishing themselves on this point, acquired the means of completely turning the right flank of the British, and gaining their rear. To prevent this calamity, Burgoyne effected during the night an entire change of position. With great skill he removed his whole army to some heights near the river, a little northward of the former camp, and he there drew up his men, expecting to be attacked on the following day. But Gates was resolved not to risk the certain triumph which his success had already secured for him. He harassed the English with skirmishes, but attempted no regular attack. Meanwhile he detached bodies of troops on both sides of the Hudson to prevent the British from recrossing that river, and to bar their retreat. When night fell, it became absolutely necessary for Burgoyne to retire again, and, accordingly, the troops were marched through a stormy and rainy night towards Saratoga, abandoning their sick and wounded, and the greater part of their baggage, to the enemy.

Before the rear-guard quitted the camp the last sad honours were paid to the brave General Fraser, who expired on the day after the action.

He had, almost with his last breath, expressed a wish to be buried in the redoubt which had formed the part of the British lines where he had been stationed, but which had now been abandoned by the English, and was within full range of the cannon which the advancing Americans were rapidly placing in position to bear upon Burgoyne's force. Burgoyne resolved, nevertheless, to comply with the dying wish of his comrade; and the interment took place under circumstances the most affecting that have ever marked a soldier's funeral. Still more interesting is the narrative of Lady Ackland's passage from the British to the American camp, after the battle, to share the captivity and alleviate the sufferings of her husband, who had been severely

Burial of  
General  
Fraser.

wounded and left in the enemy's power. The American historian Lossing has described both these touching episodes of the campaign in a spirit that does honour to the writer as well as to his subject. After narrating the death of General Fraser on the 8th of October, he says that "It was just at sunset, on that calm October evening, that the corpse of General Fraser was carried up the hill to the place of burial within the 'great redoubt'. It was attended only by the military members of his family and Mr. Brudenell, the chaplain; yet the eyes of hundreds of both armies followed the solemn procession, while the Americans, ignorant of its true character, kept up a constant cannonade upon the redoubt. The chaplain, unawed by the danger to which he was exposed, as the cannon-balls that struck the hill threw the loose soil over him, pronounced the impressive funeral service of the Church of England with an unfaltering voice. The growing darkness added solemnity to the scene. Suddenly the irregular firing ceased, and the solemn voice of a single cannon, at measured intervals, boomed along the valley, and awakened the responses of the hills. It was a minute-gun fired by the Americans in honour of the gallant dead. The moment the information was given that the gathering at the redoubt was a funeral company, fulfilling, at imminent peril, the last-breathed wishes of the noble Fraser, orders were issued to withhold the cannonade with balls, and to render military homage to the fallen brave.

"The case of Major Ackland and his heroic wife presents kindred features. He belonged to the grenadiers, and was an accomplished soldier. His wife accompanied him to Canada in 1776; and during the whole campaign of that year, and until his return to England after the surrender of Burgoyne, in the autumn of 1777, endured all the hardships, dangers, and privations of an active campaign in an enemy's country. At Chambly, on the Sorel, she attended him in illness, in a miserable hut; and when he was wounded in the battle of Hubbardton, Vermont, she hastened to him at Henesborough from Montreal, where she had been persuaded

Major Ack-  
land and  
his wife.

to remain, and resolved to follow the army hereafter. Just before crossing the Hudson she and her husband had had a narrow escape from losing their lives in consequence of their tent accidentally taking fire.

"During the terrible engagement of the 7th October she heard all the tumult and dreadful thunder of the battle in which her husband was engaged; and when, on the morning of the 8th, the British fell back in confusion to their new position, she, with the other women, was obliged to take refuge among the dead and dying, for the tents were all struck, and hardly a shed was left standing. Her husband was wounded, and a prisoner in the American camp. That gallant officer was shot through both legs. When Poor and Learned's troops assaulted the grenadiers and artillery on the British left, on the afternoon of the 7th, Wilkinson, Gates's adjutant-general, while pursuing the flying enemy when they abandoned their battery, heard a feeble voice exclaim, 'Protect me, sir, against that boy'. He turned, and saw a lad with a musket taking deliberate aim at a wounded British officer lying in a corner of a low fence. Wilkinson ordered the boy to desist, and discovered the wounded man to be Major Ackland. He had him conveyed to the quarters of General Poor (now the residence of Mr. Neilson) on the heights, where every attention was paid to his wants.

"When the intelligence that he was wounded and a prisoner reached his wife she was greatly distressed, and, by the advice of her friend Baron Reidesel, resolved to visit the American camp, and implore the favour of a personal attendance upon her husband. On the 9th she sent a message to Burgoyne by Lord Petersham, his aide-de-camp, asking permission to depart. 'Though I was ready to believe', says Burgoyne, 'that patience and fortitude, in a supreme degree, were to be found, as well as every other virtue, under the most tender forms, I was astonished at this proposal. After so long an agitation of spirits, exhausted not only for want of rest, but absolutely want of food, drenched in rain for twelve hours together, that a woman should be capable of such an undertaking as deliver-

ing herself to an enemy, probably in the night, and uncertain of what hands she might fall into, appeared an effort above human nature. The assistance I was able to give was small indeed. I had not even a cup of wine to offer her. All I could furnish her with was an open boat, and a few lines, written upon dirty wet paper, to General Gates, recommending her to his protection.' The following is a copy of the note sent by Burgoyne to General Gates:—'Sir,—Lady Harriet Ackland, a lady of the first distinction of family, rank, and personal virtues, is under such concern on account of Major Ackland, her husband, wounded and a prisoner in your hands, that I cannot refuse her request to commit her to your protection. Whatever general impropriety there may be in persons of my situation and yours to solicit favours, I cannot see the uncommon perseverance in every female grace, and the exaltation of character of this lady, and her very hard fortune, without testifying that your attentions to her will lay me under obligations.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, J. Burgoyne.' She set out in an open boat upon the Hudson, accompanied by Mr. Brudenell, the chaplain, Sarah Pollard, her waiting-maid, and her husband's valet, who had been severely wounded while searching for his master upon the battle-field. It was about sunset when they started, and a violent storm of rain and wind, which had been increasing since the morning, rendered the voyage tedious and perilous in the extreme. It was long after dark when they reached the American outposts; the sentinel heard their oars, and hailed them. Lady Harriet returned the answer herself. The clear, silvery tones of a woman's voice amid the darkness filled the soldier on duty with superstitious fear, and he called a comrade to accompany him to the river bank. The errand of the voyagers was made known, but the faithful guard, apprehensive of treachery, would not allow them to land until they sent for Major Dearborn. They were invited by that officer to his quarters, where every attention was paid to them, and Lady Harriet was comforted by the joyful tidings that her husband was safe. In the morning she experienced parental tenderness

from General Gates, who sent her to her husband, at Poor's quarters, under a suitable escort. There she remained until he was removed to Albany."

Burgoyne now took up his last position on the heights near Saratoga; and, hemmed in by the enemy, who refused any encounter, and baffled in all his attempts at finding a path of escape, he there lingered until famine compelled him to capitulate. The fortitude of the British army during this melancholy period has been justly eulogized by many native historians, but I prefer quoting the testimony of a foreign writer, as free from all possibility of partiality. Botta says:

Famine forces  
Burgoyne to  
capitulate.

"It exceeds the power of words to describe the pitiable condition to which the British army was now reduced. The troops were worn down by a series of toil, privation, sickness, and desperate fighting. They were abandoned by the Indians and Canadians; and the effective force of the whole army was now diminished by repeated and heavy losses, which had principally fallen on the best soldiers and the most distinguished officers, from ten thousand combatants to less than one-half that number. Of this remnant little more than three thousand were English.

"In these circumstances, and thus weakened, they were invested by an army of four times their own number, whose position extended three parts of a circle round them; who refused to fight them, as knowing their weakness, and who, from the nature of the ground, could not be attacked in any part. In this helpless condition, obliged to be constantly under arms, while the enemy's cannon played on every part of their camp, and even the American rifle-balls whistled in many parts of the lines, the troops of Burgoyne retained their customary firmness, and, while sinking under a hard necessity, they showed themselves worthy of a better fate. They could not be reproached with an action or a word which betrayed a want of temper or of fortitude."

At length the 13th of October arrived, and as no prospect of assistance appeared, and the provisions were nearly exhausted,

Burgoyne, by the unanimous advice of a council of war, sent a messenger to the American camp to treat of a convention.

General Gates in the first instance demanded that the royal army should surrender prisoners of war. He also proposed that the British should ground their arms. Burgoyne replied, "This article is inadmissible in every extremity; sooner than this army will consent to ground their arms in their encampment, they will rush on the enemy, determined to take no quarter". After various messages a convention for the surrender of the army was settled, which provided that "The troops under General Burgoyne were to march out of their camp with the honours of war, and the artillery of the entrenchments, to the verge of the river, where the arms and artillery were to be left. The arms to be piled by word of command from their own officers. A free passage was to be granted to the army under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to Great Britain, upon condition of not serving again in North America during the present contest."

The articles of capitulation were settled on the 15th of October: and on that very evening a messenger arrived from Clinton with an account of his successes, and with the tidings that part of his force had penetrated as far as Esopus, within fifty miles of Burgoyne's camp. But it was too late. The public faith was pledged; and the army was, indeed, too debilitated by fatigue and hunger to resist an attack if made; and Gates certainly would have made it if the convention had been broken off. Accordingly, on the 17th the convention of Saratoga was carried into effect. By this convention 5790 men surrendered themselves as prisoners. The sick and wounded left in the camp when the British retreated to Saratoga, together with the numbers of the British, German, and Canadian troops who were killed, wounded, or taken, and who had deserted in the preceding part of the expedition, were reckoned to be 4689.

The British sick and wounded who had fallen into the hands of the Americans after the battle of the 7th were treated with exemplary humanity; and when the convention was executed,

General Gates showed a noble delicacy of feeling which deserves the highest degree of honour. Every circumstance was avoided which could give the appearance of triumph. The American troops remained within their lines until the British had piled their arms; and when this was done, the vanquished officers and soldiers were received with friendly kindness by their victors, and their immediate wants were promptly and liberally supplied. Discussions and disputes afterwards arose as to some of the terms of the convention; and the American Congress refused for a long time to carry into effect the article which provided for the return of Burgoyne's men to Europe; but no blame was imputable to General Gates or his army, who showed themselves to be generous as they had proved themselves to be brave.

Gates, after the victory, immediately despatched Colonel Wilkinson to carry the happy tidings to Congress. On being introduced into the hall, he said, "The whole British army has laid down its arms at Saratoga; our own, full of vigour and courage, expect your order. It is for your wisdom to decide where the country may still have need for their service." Honours and rewards were liberally voted by the Congress to their conquering general and his men; "and it would be difficult" (says the Italian historian Botta) "to describe the transports of joy which the news of this event excited among the Americans. They began to flatter themselves with a still more happy future. No one any longer felt any doubt about their achieving their independence. All hoped, and with good reason, that a success of this importance would at length determine France, and the other European powers that waited for her example, to declare themselves in favour of America. *There could no longer be any question respecting the future; since there was no longer the risk of espousing the cause of a people too feeble to defend themselves.*"

The truth of this was soon displayed in the conduct of France. When the news arrived at Paris of the capture of Ticonderoga, and of the victorious march of Burgoyne towards Albany, events which seemed decisive in favour of the English,

instructions had been immediately despatched to Nantz, and the other ports of the kingdom, that no American privateers should be suffered to enter them, except from indispensable necessity, as to repair their vessels, to obtain provisions, or to escape the perils of the sea. The American commissioners at Paris, in their disgust and despair, had almost broken off all negotiations with the French government; and they even endeavoured to open communications with the British ministry. But the British government, elated with the first successes of Burgoyne, refused to listen to any overtures for accommodation. But when the news of Saratoga reached Paris, the whole scene was changed. Franklin and his brother commissioners found all their difficulties with the French government vanish. The time seemed to have arrived for the House of Bourbon to take a full revenge for all its humiliations and losses in previous wars. In December a treaty was arranged, and formally signed in the February following, by which France acknowledged the *Independent United States of America*. This was, of course, tantamount to a declaration of war with England. Spain soon followed France; and before long Holland took the same course. Largely aided by French fleets and troops, the Americans vigorously maintained the war against the armies which England, in spite of her European foes, continued to send across the Atlantic. But the struggle was too unequal to be maintained by this country for many years: and when the treaties of 1783 restored peace to the world, the independence of the United States was reluctantly recognized by their ancient parent and recent enemy, England.

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## CHAPTER XI

## THE BATTLE OF VALMY, A.D. 1792

"To arms! to arms! ye brave!

The avenging sword unsheathe!

March on! march on! all hearts resolved

On victory or death."

—*The Marseillaise.*

A few miles distant from the little town of St. Meneshould, in the north-east of France, are the village and hill of Valmy; and near the crest of that hill a simple monument points out the burial-place of the heart of a general of the French republic, and a marshal of the French empire.

The elder Kellerman (father of the distinguished officer of that name, whose cavalry charge decided the battle of Marengo) held high commands in the French armies throughout the wars of the Convention, the Directory, the Consulate, and the Empire. He survived those wars, and the empire itself, dying in extreme old age in 1820. The last wish of the veteran on his death-bed was that his heart should be deposited in the battle-field of Valmy, there to repose among the remains of his old companions in arms, who had fallen at his side on that spot twenty-eight years before, on the memorable day when they won the primal victory of revolutionary France, and prevented the armies of Brunswick and the emigrant bands of Condé from marching on defenceless Paris, and destroying the immature democracy in its cradle.

Duke of  
Valmy's  
dying wish.

The Duke of Valmy (for Kellerman, when made one of Napoleon's military peers in 1802, took his title from this same battle-field) had participated, during his long and active career, in the gaining of many a victory far more immediately dazzling than the one, the remembrance of which he thus cherished. He had been present at many a scene of carnage, where blood flowed in deluges, compared with which the libations of slaughter poured out at Valmy would have seemed scant and insignificant. But he rightly estimated the para-

mount importance of the battle with which he thus wished his appellation while living, and his memory after his death, to be identified. The successful resistance which the new levies and the disorganized relics of the old monarchy's army then opposed to the combined hosts and chosen leaders of Prussia, Austria, and the French refugee noblesse, determined at once and for ever the belligerent character of the Revolution. The raw artisans and tradesmen, the clumsy burghers, the base mechanics and low peasant churls, as it had been the fashion to term the middle and lower classes in France, found that they could face cannon-balls, pull triggers, and cross bayonets, without having been drilled into military machines, and without being officered by scions of noble houses. They awoke to the consciousness of their own instinctive soldiership. They at once acquired confidence in themselves and in each other; and that confidence soon grew into a spirit of unbounded audacity and ambition. "From the cannonade of Valmy may be dated the commencement of that career of victory which carried their armies to Vienna and the Kremlin."

One of the gravest reflections that arises from the contemplation of the civil restlessness and military enthusiasm which the close of the last century saw nationalized in France, is the consideration that these disturbing influences have become perpetual. No settled system of government, that shall endure from generation to generation, that shall be proof against corruption and popular violence, seems capable of taking root among the French. And every revolutionary movement in Paris thrills throughout the rest of the world. Even the successes which the Powers allied against France gained in 1814 and 1815, important as they were, could not annul the effects of the preceding twenty-three years of general convulsion and war.

In 1830 the dynasty which foreign bayonets had imposed on France was shaken off; and men trembled at the expected outbreak of French anarchy and the dreaded inroads of French ambition. They "looked forward with harassing anxiety to a period of destruction similar to that which the Roman world

The "restless"  
spirit of  
France.

experienced about the middle of the third century of our era". Louis Philippe cajoled Revolution, and then strove with seeming success to stifle it. The old Titan spirit heaved restlessly beneath "the monarchy based on republican institutions". At last, in 1848, the whole fabric of kingcraft was at once rent and scattered to the winds, by the surprising of the Parisian democracy; and insurrections, barricades, and dethronements, the downfall of coronets and crowns, the armed collisions of parties, systems, and populations, became the commonplaces of European history.

France now calls herself a Republic. She first assumed that title on the 20th of September, 1792, on the very day on which the battle of Valmy was fought and won. To that battle the democratic spirit which in 1848, as well as in 1792, proclaimed the Republic in Paris, owed its preservation, and it is thence that the imperishable activity of its principles may be dated.

Far different seemed the prospects of democracy in Europe on the eve of that battle; and far different would have been the present position and influence of the French nation, if Brunswick's columns had charged with more boldness, or the lines of Dumouriez resisted with less firmness. When France, in 1792, declared war with the Great Powers of Europe, she was far from possessing that splendid military organization which the experience of a few revolutionary campaigns taught her to assume, and which she has never abandoned. The army of the old monarchy had, during the latter part of the reign of Louis XV, sunk into gradual decay, both in numerical force and in efficiency of equipment and spirit. The laurels gained by the auxiliary regiments which Louis XVI sent to the American war did but little to restore the general tone of the army. The insubordination and licence, which the revolt of the French guards, and the participation of other troops in many of the first excesses of the Revolution, introduced among the soldiery, were soon rapidly disseminated through all the ranks. Under the Legislative Assembly every complaint of the soldier against

Apparent help-  
lessness of  
France in 1792.

his officer, however frivolous or ill-founded, was listened to with eagerness, and investigated with partiality, on the principles of liberty and equality. Discipline accordingly became more and more relaxed; and the dissolution of several of the old corps, under the pretext of their being tainted with an aristocratic feeling, aggravated the confusion and inefficiency of the war department. Many of the most effective regiments during the last period of the monarchy had consisted of foreigners. These had either been slaughtered in defence of the throne against insurrections, like the Swiss; or had been disbanded, and had crossed the frontier to recruit the forces which were assembling for the invasion of France. Above all, the emigration of the noblesse had stripped the French army of nearly all its officers of high rank, and of the greatest portion of its subalterns. More than twelve thousand of the high-born youth of France, who had been trained to regard military command as their exclusive patrimony, and to whom the nation had been accustomed to look up as its natural guides and champions in the storm of war, were now marshalled beneath the banner of Condé and the other emigrant princes, for the overthrow of the French armies and the reduction of the French capital. Their successors in the French regiments and brigades had as yet acquired neither skill nor experience: they possessed neither self-reliance nor the respect of the men who were under them.

Such was the state of the wrecks of the old army; but the bulk of the forces with which France began the war consisted of raw insurrectionary levies, which were even less to be depended on. The Carmagnoles, as the revolutionary volunteers were called, flocked, indeed, readily to the frontier from every department when the war was proclaimed, and the fierce leaders of the Jacobins shouted that the country was in danger. They were full of zeal and courage, "heated and excited by the scenes of the Revolution, and inflamed by the florid eloquence, the songs, dances, and signal-words with which it had been celebrated". But they were utterly undisciplined, and turbulently impatient of

The dregs of  
society in  
the ranks.

superior authority or systematical control. Many ruffians, also, who were sullied with participation in the most sanguinary horrors of Paris, joined the camps, and were pre-eminent alike for misconduct before the enemy and for savage insubordination against their own officers. On one occasion during the campaign of Valmy, eight battallions of federates, intoxicated with massacre and sedition, joined the forces under Dumouriez, and soon threatened to uproot all discipline, saying openly that the ancient officers were traitors, and that it was necessary to purge the army, as they had Paris, of its aristocrats. Dumouriez posted these battallions apart from the others, placed a strong force of cavalry behind them, and two pieces of cannon on their flank. Then, affecting to review them, he halted at the head of the line, surrounded by all his staff, and an escort of a hundred hussars. "Fellows," said he, "for I will not call you either citizens or soldiers, you see before you this artillery, behind you this cavalry; you are stained with crimes, and I do not tolerate here assassins or executioners. I know that there are scoundrels amongst you charged to excite you to crime. Drive them from amongst you, or denounce them to me, for I shall hold you responsible for their conduct."

Such phalanxed masses of fighters did the Carmagnoles ultimately become; but France ran a fearful risk in being obliged to rely on them when the process of their transmutation had barely commenced.

The first events, indeed, of the war were disastrous and disgraceful to France, even beyond what might have been expected from the chaotic state in which it found her armies as well as her government. In the French panics at the time. hopes of profiting by the unprepared state of Austria, then the mistress of the Netherlands, the French opened the campaign of 1792 by an invasion of Flanders, with forces whose muster-rolls showed a numerical overwhelming superiority to the enemy, and seemed to promise a speedy conquest of that old battle-field of Europe. But the first flash of an Austrian sabre, or the first sound of Austrian gun, was enough to dis-

comfit the French. Their first corps, four thousand strong, that advanced from Lille across the frontier, came suddenly upon a far inferior detachment of the Austrian garrison of Tournay. Not a shot was fired, not a bayonet levelled. With one simultaneous cry of panic the French broke and ran headlong back to Lille, where they completed the specimen of insubordination which they had given in the field, by murdering their general and several of their chief officers. On the same day another division, under Biron, mustering ten thousand sabres and bayonets, saw a few Austrian skirmishers reconnoitering their position. The French advanced posts had scarcely given and received a volley, and only a few balls from the enemy's field-pieces had fallen among the lines, when two regiments of French dragoons raised the cry, "We are betrayed", galloped off, and were followed in disgraceful rout by the rest of the whole army. Similar panics, or repulses almost equally discreditable, occurred whenever Rochambeau, or Luckner, or La Fayette, the earliest French generals in the war, brought their troops into the presence of the enemy.

Meanwhile, the allied sovereigns had gradually collected on the Rhine a veteran and finely-disciplined army for the invasion of France, which for numbers, equipment, and martial renown, both of generals and men, was equal to any that Germany had ever sent forth to conquer. Their design was to strike boldly and decisively at the heart of France, and, penetrating the country through the Ardennes, to proceed by Chalons upon Paris. The obstacles that lay in their way seemed insignificant. The disorder and imbecility of the French armies had been even augmented by the forced flight of La Fayette, and a sudden change of generals. The only troops posted on or near the track by which the Allies were about to advance, were the twenty-three thousand men at Sedan, whom La Fayette had commanded, and a corps of twenty thousand near Metz, the command of which had just been transferred from Luckner to Kellerman. There were only three fortresses which it was necessary for the Allies to capture or mask—Sedan, Longwy,

The Allies expect  
a "promenade  
to Paris".

and Verdun. The defences and stores of these three were known to be wretchedly dismantled and insufficient; and when once these feeble barriers were overcome, and Chalons reached, a fertile and unprotected country seemed to invite the invaders to that "military promenade to Paris", which they gaily talked of accomplishing.

At the end of July the allied army, having completed all preparations for the campaign, broke up from its cantonments, and, marching from Luxembourg upon Longwy, crossed the French frontier. Sixty thousand Prussians, trained in the school, and many of them under the eye of the Great Frederick, heirs of the glories of the Seven Years' war, and universally esteemed the best troops in Europe, marched in one column against the central point of attack. Forty-five thousand Austrians, the greater part of whom were picked troops, and had served in the recent Turkish war, supplied two formidable corps that supported the flanks of the Prussians. There was also a powerful body of Hessians, and leagued with the Germans against the Parisian democracy came fifteen thousand of the noblest and bravest amongst the sons of France. In these corps of emigrants, many of the highest born of the French nobility, scions of houses whose chivalric trophies had for centuries filled Europe with renown, served as rank and file. They looked on the road to Paris as the path which they were to carve out by their swords to victory, to honour, to the rescue of their king, to reunion with their families, to the recovery of their patrimony, and to the restoration of their order.

Great strength of  
allied army  
against France.

Over this imposing army the allied sovereigns placed as generalissimo the Duke of Brunswick, one of the minor reigning princes of Germany, a statesman of no mean capacity, and who had acquired in the Seven Years' war a military reputation second only to that of the Great Frederick himself. He had been deputed a few years before to quell the popular movements which then took place in Holland; and he had put down the attempted revolution in that country with a promptitude and completeness which appeared to augur equal success

to the army that now marched under his orders on a similar mission into France.

Moving majestically forward, with leisurely deliberation, that seemed to show the consciousness of superior strength, and a steady purpose of doing their work thoroughly, the Allies appeared before Longwy on the 20th of August, and the dispirited and dependent garrison opened the gates of that fortress to them after the first shower of bombs. On the 2nd of September the still more important stronghold of Verdun capitulated after scarcely the shadow of resistance.

Brunswick's superior force was now interposed between Kellerman's troops on the left, and the other French army near Sedan, which La Fayette's flight had, for the time, left destitute of a commander. It was in the power of the German general, by striking with an overwhelming mass to the right and left, to crush in succession each of these weak armies, and the Allies might then have marched irresistible and unresisted upon Paris. But at this crisis Dumouriez, the new commander-in-chief of the French, arrived at the camp near Sedan, and commenced a series of movements, by which he reunited the dispersed and disorganized forces of his country, checked the Prussian columns at the very moment when the last obstacles of their triumph seemed to have given way, and finally rolled back the tide of invasion far across the enemy's frontier.

The French fortresses had fallen; but nature herself still offered to brave and vigorous defenders of the land the means of opposing a barrier to the progress of the Allies. A ridge of broken ground, called the Argonne, extends from the vicinity of Sedan towards the south-west for about fifteen or sixteen leagues. The country of L'Argonne has now been cleared and drained; but in 1792 it was thickly wooded, and the lower portions of its unequal surface were filled with rivulets and marshes. It thus presented a natural barrier of from four to five leagues broad, which was absolutely impenetrable to an army, except by a few defiles, such as an inferior force might easily fortify and defend. Dumouriez succeeded in marching his army down from Sedan behind the

The barrier of  
the Argonne.



Argonne, and in occupying its passes, while the Prussians still lingered on the north-eastern side of the forest line. Ordering Kellerman to wheel round from Metz to St. Menchould, and the reinforcements from the interior and extreme north also to concentrate at that spot, Dumouriez trusted to assemble a powerful force in the rear of the south-west extremity of the Argonne, while, with the twenty-five thousand men under his immediate command, he held the enemy at bay before the passes, or forced him to a long circumvolution round one extremity of the forest ridge, during which, favourable opportunities of assailing his flank were almost certain to occur. Dumouriez fortified the principal defiles, and boasted of the Thermopylæ which he had found for the invaders; but the simile was nearly rendered fatally complete for the defending force. A pass, which was thought of inferior importance, had been but slightly manned, and an Austrian corps under Clairfayt forced it after some sharp fighting. Dumouriez with great difficulty saved himself from being enveloped and destroyed by the hostile columns that now pushed through the forest. But instead of despairing at the failure of his plans, and falling back into the interior, to be completely severed from Kellerman's army, to be hunted as a fugitive under the walls of Paris by the victorious Germans, and to lose all chance of ever rallying his dispirited troops, he resolved to cling to the difficult country in which the armies still were grouped, to force a junction with Kellerman, and so to place himself at the head of a force which the invaders would not dare to disregard, and by which he might drag them back from the advance on Paris, which he had not been able to bar. Accordingly, by a rapid movement to the south, during which, in his own words, "France was within a hair's-breadth of destruction", and after, with difficulty, checking several panics of his troops, in which they ran by thousands at the sight of a few Prussian hussars, Dumouriez succeeded in establishing his head-quarters in a strong position at St. Menchould, protected by the marshes and shallows of the river Aisne and Aube, beyond which, to the north-west, rose a firm and elevated

plateau, called Dampierre's Camp, admirably situated for commanding the road by Chalons to Paris, and where he intended to post Kellerman's army so soon as it came up.

The news of the retreat of Dumouriez from the Argonne passes, and of the panic flight of some divisions of his troops, spread rapidly throughout the country; and Kellerman, who believed that his comrade's army had been annihilated, and feared to fall among the victorious masses of the Prussians, had halted on his march from Metz when almost close to St. Menehould. He had actually commenced a retrograde movement, when couriers from his commander-in-chief checked him from that fatal course; and then, continuing to wheel round the rear and left flank of the troops at St. Menehould, Kellerman, with twenty thousand of the army of Metz, and some thousands of volunteers who had joined him in the march, made his appearance to the west of Dumouriez, on the very evening when Westerman and Thouvenot, two of the staff-officers of Dumouriez, galloped in with the tidings that Brunswick's army had come through the upper passes of the Argonne in full force, and was deploying on the heights of La Lune, a chain of eminences that stretch obliquely from south-west to north-east, opposite the high ground which Dumouriez held, and also opposite, but at a shorter distance from, the position which Kellerman was designed to occupy.

The Allies were now, in fact, nearer to Paris than were the French troops themselves; but, as Dumouriez had foreseen, Brunswick deemed it unsafe to march upon the capital with so large a hostile force left in his rear between his advancing columns and his base of operations. The young king of Prussia, who was in the allied camp, and the emigrant princes, eagerly advocated an instant attack upon the nearest French general. Kellerman had laid himself unnecessarily open, by advancing beyond Dampierre's Camp, which Dumouriez had designed for him, and moving forward across the Aube to the plateau of Valmy, a post inferior in strength and space to that which he had left, and which brought him close upon the Prussian lines, leaving him separated by a dangerous interval

from the troops under Dumouriez himself. It seemed easy for the Prussian army to overwhelm him while thus isolated, and then they might surround and crush Dumouriez at their leisure.

Accordingly, the right wing of the allied army moved forward, in the gray of the morning of 20th September, to gain Kellerman's left flank and rear, and cut him off from retreat upon Chalons, while the Movement to cut off Kellerman.

rest of the army, moving from the heights of La Lune, which here converge semicircularly round the plateau of Valmy, were to assail his position in front, and interpose between him and Dumouriez. An unexpected collision between some of the advanced cavalry on each side in the low ground warned Kellerman of the enemy's approach. Dumouriez had not been unobservant of the danger of his comrade, thus isolated and involved; and he had ordered up troops to support Kellerman on either flank in the event of his being attacked. These troops, however, moved forward slowly; and Kellerman's army, ranged on the plateau of Valmy, "projected like a cape into the midst of the lines of the Prussian bayonets". A thick autumnal mist floated in waves of vapour over the plains and ravines that lay between the two armies, leaving only the crests and peaks of the hills glittering in the early light. About ten o'clock the fog began to clear off, and then the French, from their promontory, saw emerging from the white wreaths of mist, and glittering in the sunshine, the countless Prussian cavalry which were to envelop them as in a net if once driven from their position, the solid columns of the infantry that moved forward as if animated by a single will, the bristling batteries of the artillery, and the glancing clouds of the Austrian light troops, fresh from their contests with the Spahis of the east.

The best and bravest of the French must have beheld this spectacle with secret apprehension and awe. However bold and resolute a man may be in the discharge of duty, it is an anxious and fearful thing to be called on to encounter danger among comrades of whose steadiness you can feel no certainty.

Each soldier of Kellerman's army must have remembered the series of panic routs which had hitherto invariably taken place on the French side during the war; and must have cast restless glances to the right and left, to see if any symptoms of wavering began to show themselves, and to calculate how long it was likely to be before a general rush of his comrades to the rear would either hurry him off with involuntary disgrace, or leave him alone and helpless, to be cut down by assailing multitudes.

On that very morning, and at the self-same hour in which the allied forces and the emigrants began to descend from La Lune to the attack of Valmy, and while the cannonade was opening between the Prussian and the Revolutionary batteries, the debate in the National Convention at Paris commenced on the proposal to proclaim France a Republic.

Proclamation  
that morning of  
the Republic.

The old monarchy had little chance of support in the hall of the Convention; but if its more effective advocates at Valmy had triumphed, there were yet the elements existing in France for a permanent revival of the better part of the ancient institutions, and for substituting Reform for Revolution. Only a few weeks before, numerous signed addresses from the middle classes in Paris, Rouen, and other large cities, had been presented to the king, expressive of their horror of the anarchists, and their readiness to uphold the rights of the crown, together with the liberties of the subject. And an armed resistance to the authority of the Convention, and in favour of the king, was in reality at this time being actively organized in La Vendée and Brittany, the importance of which may be estimated from the formidable opposition which the Royalists of those provinces made to the Republican party, at a later period, and under much more disadvantageous circumstances. It is a fact peculiarly illustrative of the importance of the battle of Valmy, that "during the summer of 1792 the gentlemen of Brittany entered into an extensive association for the purpose of rescuing the country from the oppressive yoke which had been imposed by the Parisian demagogues. At the head of the whole was the Marquis de la Rouarie, one of those

remarkable men who rise into pre-eminence during the stormy days of a revolution, from conscious ability to direct its current. Ardent, impetuous, and enthusiastic, he was first distinguished in the American war, when the intrepidity of his conduct attracted the admiration of the Republican troops, and the same qualities rendered him at first an ardent supporter of the Revolution in France; but when the atrocities of the people began, he espoused with equal warmth the opposite side, and used the utmost efforts to rouse the noblesse of Brittany against the plebeian yoke which had been imposed upon them by the National Assembly. He submitted his plan to the Count d'Artois, and had organized one so extensive, as would have proved extremely formidable to the Convention, if the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, in September 1792, had not damped the ardour of the whole of the west of France, then ready to break out into insurrection."

And it was not only among the zealots of the old monarchy that the cause of the king would then have found friends. The ineffable atrocities of the September massacres had just occurred, and the reaction produced by them among thousands who had previously been active on the ultra-democratic side was fresh and powerful. The nobility had not yet been made utter aliens in the eyes of the nation by long expatriation and civil war. There was not yet a generation of youth educated in revolutionary principles, and knowing no worship save that of military glory. Louis XVI was just and humane, and deeply sensible of the necessity of a gradual extension of political rights among all classes of his subjects. The Bourbon throne, if rescued in 1792, would have had chances of stability, such as did not exist for it in 1814, and seem never likely to be found again in France.

French  
monarchy in  
the balance.

Serving under Kellerman on that day was one who experienced, perhaps the most deeply of all men, the changes for good and for evil which the French Revolution has produced. He who, in his second exile, bore the name of the Count de Neuilly in this country, and who lately was Louis

Philippe, King of the French, figured in the French lines at Valmy as a young and gallant officer, cool and sagacious beyond his years, and trusted accordingly by Kellerman and Dumouriez with an important station in the national army. The Duc de Chartres (the title he then bore) commanded the French right, General Valence was on the left, and Kellerman himself took his post in the centre, which was the strength and key of his position.

Besides these celebrated men, who were in the French army, and besides the King of Prussia, the Duke of Brunswick, and

other men of rank and power, who were in the lines of the Allies, there was an individual present at the battle of Valmy, of little political note, but who has exercised, and exercises, a greater influence over the human mind, and whose fame is more widely spread than that of either duke, or general, or king. This was the German poet Goethe, who had, out of curiosity, accompanied the allied army on its march into France as a mere spectator. He has given us a curious record of the sensations which he experienced during the cannonade. It must be remembered that many thousands in the French ranks then, like Goethe, felt the "cannon-fever" for the first time. The German poet says:—

"I had heard so much of the cannon-fever, that I wanted to know what kind of thing it was. *Ennui*, and a spirit which every kind of danger excites to daring, nay even to rashness, induced me to ride up quite coolly to the outwork of La Lune. This was again occupied by our people; but it presented the wildest aspect. The roofs were shot to pieces; the corn-shocks scattered about, the bodies of men mortally wounded stretched upon them here and there; and occasionally a spent cannon-ball fell and rattled among the ruins of the tile roofs.

"Quite alone, and left to myself, I rode away on the heights to the left, and could plainly survey the favourable position of the French; they were standing in the form of a semicircle in the greatest quiet and security; Kellerman, then on the left wing, being the easiest to reach.

"I fell in with good company on the way, officers of my acquaintance, belonging to the general staff and the regiment, greatly surprised to find me here. They wanted to take me back again with them; but I spoke to them of particular objects I had in view, and they left me without further dissuasion, to my well-known singular caprice.

"I had now arrived quite in the region where the balls were playing across me: the sound of them is curious enough, as if it were composed of the humming of tops, the gurgling of water, and the whistling of birds. They were less dangerous, by reason of the wetness of the ground: wherever one fell, it stuck fast. And thus my foolish experimental ride was secured against the danger at least of the balls rebounding.

"In the midst of these circumstances I was soon able to remark that something unusual was taking place within me. I paid close attention to it, and still the sensation can be described only by similitude. It appeared as if you were in some extremely hot place, and, at the same time, quite penetrated by the heat of it, so that you feel yourself, as it were, quite one with the element in which you are. The eyes lose nothing of their strength or clearness; but it is as if the world had a kind of brown-red tint, which makes the situation, as well as the surrounding objects, more impressive. I was unable to perceive any agitation of the blood; but everything seemed rather to be swallowed up in the glow of which I speak. From this, then, it is clear in what sense this condition can be called a fever. It is remarkable, however, that the horrible uneasy feeling arising from it is produced in us solely through the ears; for the cannon-thunder, the howling and crashing of the balls through the air, is the real cause of these sensations.

"After I had ridden back, and was in perfect security, I remarked with surprise that the glow was completely extinguished, and not the slightest feverish agitation was left behind. On the whole, this condition is one of the least desirable; as, indeed, among my dear and noble comrades I found scarcely one who expressed a really passionate desire to try it."

Contrary to the expectations of both friends and foes, the French infantry held their ground steadily under the fire of the Prussian guns, which thundered on them from "Vive la Nation!" La Lune; and their own artillery replied with equal spirit and greater effect on the denser masses of the allied army. Thinking that the Prussians were slackening in their fire, Kellerman formed a column in charging order, and dashed down into the valley, in the hopes of capturing some of the nearest guns of the enemy. A masked battery opened its fire on the French column and drove it back in disorder, Kellerman having his horse shot under him, and being with difficulty carried off by his men. The Prussian columns now advanced in turn. The French artillerymen began to waver and desert their posts, but were rallied by the efforts and example of their officers; and Kellerman, reorganizing the line of his infantry, took his station in the ranks on foot, and called out to his men to let the enemy come close up, and then to charge them with the bayonet. The troops caught the enthusiasm of their general, and a cheerful shout of *Vive la Nation!* taken by one battalion from another, pealed across the valley to the assailants. The Prussians flinched from a charge up-hill against a force that seemed so resolute and formidable; they halted for a while in the hollow, and then slowly retreated up their own side of the valley.

Indignant at being thus repulsed by such a foe, the King of Prussia formed the flower of his men in person, and, riding along the column, bitterly reproached them with letting their standard be thus humiliated. Then he led them on again to the attack, marching in the front line, and seeing his staff mowed down around him by the deadly fire which the French artillery reopened. But the troops sent by Dumouriez were now co-operating effectually with Kellerman, and that general's own men, flushed by success, presented a firmer front than ever. Again the Prussians retreated, leaving eight hundred dead behind, and at nightfall the French remained victors on the heights of Valmy.

All hopes of crushing the revolutionary armies, and of the



promenade to Paris, had now vanished, though Brunswick lingered long in the Argonne, till distress and sickness wasted away his once splendid force, and finally but a mere wreck of it recrossed the frontier. France, meanwhile, felt that she possessed a giant's strength, and like a giant did she use it. Before the close of that year all Belgium obeyed the National Convention at Paris, and the kings of Europe, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, trembled once more before a conquering military Republic.

Goethe's description of the cannonade has been quoted. His observation to his comrades in the camp of the Allies, at the end of the battle, deserves citation also. It shows "New era in world's history." that the poet felt (and, probably, he alone of the thousands there assembled felt) the full importance of that day. He describes the consternation and the change of demeanour which he observed among his Prussian friends that evening. He tells us that "most of them were silent; and, in fact, the power of reflection and judgment was wanting to all. At last I was called upon to say what I thought of the engagement, for I had been in the habit of enlivening and amusing the troop with short sayings. This time I said: *'From this place, and from this day forth, commences a new era in the world's history; and you can all say that you were present at its birth.'*"

## CHAPTER XII

### THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO, A.D. 1815

"Thou first and last of fields, king-making victory."—*Byron*

The Congress of Emperors, Kings, Princes, Generals, and Statesmen, who had assembled at Vienna to remodel the world after the overthrow of the mighty conqueror, and who thought that Napoleon had passed away for ever from the great drama of European politics, had not yet completed their triumphant festivities and their diplo-

Escape of  
Napoleon  
from Elba

matic toils, when Talleyrand, on the 11th of March, 1815, rose up among them, and announced that the ex-emperor had escaped from Elba, and was Emperor of France once more. It is recorded by Sir Walter Scott, as a curious physiological fact, that the first effect of the news of an event which threatened to neutralize all their labours was to excite a loud burst of laughter from nearly every member of the Congress. But the jest was a bitter one: and they soon were deeply busied in anxious deliberations respecting the mode in which they should encounter their arch-enemy, who had thus started from torpor and obscurity into renovated splendour and strength.

Napoleon sought to disunite the formidable confederacy, which he knew would be arrayed against him, by endeavouring to negotiate separately with each of the allied sovereigns. It is said that Austria and Russia were at first not unwilling to treat with him. Disputes and jealousies had been rife among several of the Allies on the subject of the division of the conquered countries; and the cordial unanimity with which they had acted during 1813 and the first month of 1814 had grown chill during some weeks of discussions. But the active exertions of Talleyrand, who represented Louis XVIII at the Congress, and who both hated and feared Napoleon with all the intensity of which his powerful spirit was capable, prevented the secession of any member of the Congress from the new great league against their ancient enemy. Still, it is highly probable that, if Napoleon had triumphed in Belgium over the Prussians and the English, he would have succeeded in opening negotiations with the Austrians and Russians; and he might have thus gained advantages similar to those which he had obtained on his return from Egypt, when he induced the Czar Paul to withdraw the Russian armies from co-operating with the other enemies of France in the extremity of peril to which he seemed reduced in 1799. But fortune now had deserted him both in diplomacy and in war.

On the 13th of March, 1815, the ministers of the seven Powers, Austria, Spain, England, Portugal, Prussia, Russia,

and Sweden, signed a manifesto, by which they declared Napoleon an outlaw; and this denunciation was instantly followed up by a treaty between England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia (to which other powers soon acceded), by which the rulers of those countries bound themselves to enforce that decree, and to prosecute the war until Napoleon should be driven from the throne of France, and rendered incapable of disturbing the peace of Europe. The Duke of Wellington was the representative of England at the Congress of Vienna, and he was immediately applied to for his advice on the plan of military operations against France. It was obvious that Belgium would be the first battle-field; and by the general wish of the Allies, the English duke proceeded thither to assemble an army from the contingents of Dutch, Belgian, and Hanoverian troops that were most speedily available, and from the English regiments which his own Government was hastening to send over from this country. A strong Prussian corps was near Aix-la-Chapelle, having remained there since the campaign of the preceding year. This was largely reinforced by other troops of the same nation; and Marshal Blucher, the favourite hero of the Prussian soldiery, and the deadliest foe of France, assumed the command of this army, which was termed the Army of the Lower Rhine, and which, in conjunction with Wellington's forces, was to make the van of the armaments of the Allied Powers. Meanwhile Prince Swartzenburg was to collect 130,000 Austrians, and 124,000 troops of other Germanic States, as "the Army of the Upper Rhine"; and 168,000 Russians, under the command of Barclay de Tolly, were to form "the Army of the Middle Rhine", and to repeat the march from Muscovy to that river's banks.

The exertions which the Allied Powers thus made at this crisis to grapple promptly with the French emperor have truly been termed gigantic; and never were Napoleon's genius and activity more signally displayed, than in the celerity and skill by which he brought forward all the military resources of France, which the re-

Action of the  
European Powers.

verses of the three preceding years, and the pacific policy of the Bourbons during the months of their first restoration, had greatly diminished and disorganized. He re-entered Paris on the 20th of March, and by the end of May, besides sending a force into La Vendée to put down the armed risings of the Royalists in that province, and besides providing troops under Massena and Suchet for the defence of the southern frontiers of France, Napoleon had an army assembled in the north-east for active operations under his own command, which amounted to between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and thirty thousand men, with a superb park of artillery, and in the highest possible state of equipment, discipline, and efficiency.

The approach of the multitudinous Russian, Austrian, Bavarian, and other foes of the French emperor to the Rhine was necessarily slow; but the two most active of the Allied Powers had occupied Belgium with their troops while Napoleon was organizing his forces. Marshal Blucher was there with one hundred and sixteen thousand Prussians; and before the end of May, the Duke of Wellington was there also with about one hundred and six thousand troops, either British or or in British pay.<sup>1</sup> Napoleon determined to attack these enemies in Belgium. The disparity of numbers was indeed great, but delay was sure to increase the proportionate numerical superiority of his enemies over his own ranks. The French emperor considered also that "the enemy's troops were now cantoned under the command of two generals, and composed of nations differing both in interest and in feelings". His own army was under his own sole command. It was composed exclusively of French soldiers, mostly of veterans, well acquainted with their officers and with each other, and full of enthusiastic confidence in their commander. If he could separate the Prussians from the British, so as to attack each singly, he felt sanguine of success, not only against these

<sup>1</sup> Wellington had but a small part of his old Peninsular army in Belgium. The flower of it had been sent on the expeditions against America. His troops, in 1815, were chiefly second battalions, or regiments lately filled up with new recruits.

the most resolute of his many adversaries, but also against the other masses, that were slowly labouring up against his eastern dominions.

On the 14th Napoleon arrived among his troops, who were exulting at the display of their commander's skill in the celerity and precision with which they had been drawn together, and in the consciousness of their collective strength. Although Napoleon too often permitted himself to use language unworthy of his own character respecting his great English adversary, his real feelings in commencing this campaign may be judged from the last words which he spoke, as he threw himself into his travelling carriage to leave Paris for the army. "I go", he said, "to measure myself with Wellington."

Napoleon  
reaches  
the troops.

The enthusiasm of the French soldiers at seeing their emperor among them was still more excited by the "Order of the day", in which he thus appealed to them:

"Napoleon, by the Grace of God, and the Constitution of the Empire,  
Emperor of the French, &c., to the Grand Army.

"AT THE IMPERIAL HEAD-QUARTERS,

*Avesnes, June 14th, 1815.*

"Soldiers! this day is the anniversary of Marengo and of Friedland, which twice decided the destiny of Europe. Then, as after Austerlitz, as after Wagram, we were too generous! We believed in the protestations and in the oaths of princes, whom we left on their thrones. Now, however, leagued together, they aim at the independence and the most sacred rights of France. They have commenced the most unjust of aggressions. Let us, then, march to meet them. Are they and we no longer the same men?

"Soldiers! at Jena, against these same Prussians, now so arrogant, you were one to three, and at Montmirail one to six!

"Let those among you who have been captives to the English, describe the nature of their prison-ships, and the fruitful miseries they endured.

"The Saxons, the Belgians, the Hanoverians, the soldiers of the Confederation of the Rhine, lament that they are compelled to use their arms in the cause of princes, the enemies of justice and of the rights of all nations. They know that this coalition is insatiable! After having devoured twelve millions of Poles, twelve millions of Italians, one million of Saxons, and six millions of Belgians, it now wishes to devour the states of the second rank in Germany.

"Madmen! one moment of prosperity has bewildered them. The oppression and the humiliation of the French people are beyond their power. If they enter France they will there find their grave.

Soldiers! we have forced marches to make, battles to fight, dangers to encounter; but, with firmness, victory will be ours. The rights, the honour, and the happiness of the country will be recovered!

"To every Frenchman who has a heart, the moment is now arrived to conquer or to die.

"NAPOLEON,  
"THE MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA,  
"MAJOR GENERAL."

The 15th of June had scarcely dawned before the French army was in motion for the decisive campaign, and crossed the frontier in three columns, which were pointed upon Charleroi and its vicinity. The French line of advance upon Brussels, which city Napoleon resolved to occupy, thus lay right through the centre of the cantonments of the Allies.

Much criticism has been expended on the supposed surprise of Wellington's army in its cantonments by Napoleon's rapid advance. These comments would hardly have been made if sufficient attention had been paid to the geography of the Waterloo campaign; and if it had been remembered that the protection of Brussels was justly considered by the allied generals a matter of primary importance. If Napoleon could, either by manœuvring or fighting, have succeeded in occupying that city, the greater part of Belgium would unquestion-

ably have declared in his favour; and the results of such a success, gained by the Emperor at the commencement of the campaign, might have decisively influenced the whole after-current of events. A glance at a map will show the numerous roads that lead from the different fortresses on the French north-eastern frontier, and converge upon Brussels; any one of which Napoleon might have chosen for the advance of a strong force upon that city. The Duke's army was judiciously arranged, so as to enable him to concentrate troops on any one of these roads sufficiently in advance of Brussels to check an assailing enemy. The army was kept thus available for movement in any necessary direction, till certain intelligence arrived on the 15th of June that the French had crossed the frontier in large force near Thuin, that they had driven back the Prussian advanced troops under General Ziethen, and were also moving across the Sambre upon Charleroi.

Marshal Blücher now rapidly concentrated his forces, calling them in from the left upon Ligny, which is to the north-east of Charleroi. Wellington also drew his troops together, calling them in from the right. But Wellington and Blücher concert action. even now, though it was certain that the French

were in large force at Charleroi, it was unsafe for the English general to place his army directly between that place and Brussels, until it was certain that no corps of the enemy was marching upon Brussels by the western road through Mons and Hal. The Duke, therefore, collected his troops in Brussels and its immediate vicinity, ready to move due southward upon Quatre Bras, and co-operate with Blücher, who was taking his station at Ligny: but also ready to meet and defeat any manœuvre that the enemy might make to turn the right of the Allies, and occupy Brussels by a flanking movement. The testimony of the Prussian general Baron Muffling, who was attached to the Duke's staff during the campaign, and who expressly states the reasons on which the English general acted, ought for ever to have silenced the "weak inventions of the enemy" about the Duke of Wellington having been deceived and surprised by his assailant, which

some writers of our own nation, as well as foreigners, have incautiously repeated.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon of the 15th that a Prussian officer reached Brussels, whom General Ziethen had sent to Muffling to inform him of the advance of the main French army upon Charleroi. Muffling immediately communicated this to the Duke of Wellington, and asked him whether he would now concentrate his army, and what would be his point of concentration; observing that Marshal Blucher in consequence of this intelligence would certainly concentrate the Prussians at Ligny. The Duke replied—"If all is as General Ziethen supposes, I will concentrate on my left wing and so be in readiness to fight in conjunction with the Prussian army. Should, however, a portion of the enemy's force come by Mons, I must concentrate more towards my centre. This is the reason why I must wait for positive news from Mons before I fix the rendezvous. Since, however, it is certain that the troops *must* march, though it is uncertain upon what precise spot they must march, I will order all to be in readiness, and will direct a brigade to move at once towards Quatre Bras."

Later in the same day a message from Blucher himself was delivered to Muffling, in which the Prussian field-marshal informed the Baron that he was concentrating his men at Sombref and Ligny, and charged Muffling to give him speedy intelligence respecting the concentration of Wellington. Muffling immediately communicated this to the Duke, who expressed his satisfaction with Blucher's arrangements, but added that he could not even then resolve upon his own point of concentration before he obtained the desired intelligence from Mons. About midnight this information arrived. The Duke went to the quarters of General Muffling, and told him that he now had received his reports from Mons, and was sure that no French troops were advancing by that route, but that the mass of the enemy's force was decidedly directed on Charleroi. He informed the Prussian general that he had ordered the British troops to move forward upon Quatre Bras;



but with characteristic coolness and sagacity resolved not to give the appearance of alarm by hurrying on with them himself. A ball was to be given by the Duchess of Richmond at Brussels that night, and the Duke proposed to General Muffling that they should go to the ball for a few hours, and ride forward in the morning to overtake the troops at Quatre Bras.

To hundreds who were assembled at that memorable ball, the news that the enemy was advancing, and that the time for battle had come, must have been a fearfully exciting surprise; but the Duke and his principal officers knew well the stern termination to that festive scene which was approaching. One by one, and in such a way as to attract as little observation as possible, the leaders of the various corps left the ball-room, and took their stations at the head of their men, who were pressing forward through the last hours of the short summer night to the arena of anticipated slaughter.

Wellington remained at the Duchess of Richmond's ball at Brussels till about three o'clock in the morning of the 16th, "showing himself very cheerful", as Baron Muffling, who accompanied him, observes. At five o'clock the Duke and the Baron were on horseback, and reached the position at Quatre Bras about eleven. As the French, who were in front of Frasne, were perfectly quiet, and the Duke was informed that a very large force under Napoleon in person was menacing Blucher, it was thought possible that only a slight detachment of the French was posted at Frasne in order to mask the English army. In that event Wellington, as he told Baron Muffling, would be able to employ his whole strength in supporting the Prussians: and he proposed to ride across from Quatre Bras to Blucher's position, in order to concert with him personally the measures which should be taken in order to bring on a decisive battle with the French. Wellington and Muffling rode accordingly towards Ligny, and found Marshal Blucher and his staff at the windmill of Bry, near that village. The Prussian army, 80,000 strong, was drawn up chiefly along a chain of heights, with the villages of Sombref, St. Amand,

and Ligny in their front. These villages were strongly occupied by Prussian detachments, and formed the keys of Blücher's position. The heads of the columns which Napoleon was forming for the attack were visible in the distance. The Duke asked Blücher and General Gneisenau (who was Blücher's adviser in matters of strategy) what they wished him to do. Muffling had already explained to them in a few words the Duke's earnest desire to support the field-marshal, and that he would do all that they wished, provided they did not ask him to divide his army, which was contrary to his principles. The Duke wished to advance with his army (as soon as it was concentrated) upon Frasne and Gosselies, and thence to move upon Napoleon's flank and rear. The Prussian leaders preferred that he should march his men from Quatre Bras by the Namur road, so as to form a reserve in rear of Blücher's army. The Duke replied, "Well, I will come if I am not attacked myself", and galloped back with Muffling to Quatre Bras, where the French attack was now actually raging.

Meanwhile the French and the Prussians had been fighting in and round the villages of Ligny, Sombref, and St. Amand, from three in the afternoon to nine in the evening, with a savage inveteracy almost unparalleled in modern warfare. Blücher had in the field, when he began the battle, 83,417 men and 224 guns. Blücher had, in fact, a superiority of more than 12,000 in number over the French army that attacked him at Ligny. The numerical difference was even greater at the beginning of the battle, as Lobau's corps did not come up from Charleroi till eight o'clock. After five hours and a half of desperate and long-doubtful struggle, Napoleon succeeded in breaking the centre of the Prussian line at Ligny, and in forcing his obstinate antagonists off the field of battle. The issue was attributable to his skill, and not to any want of spirit or resolution on the part of the Prussian troops; nor did they, though defeated, abate one jot in discipline, heart, or hope. As Blücher observed, it was a battle in which his army lost the day but not its honour. The Prussians retreated during the night of the 16th and the early part of the 17th,

with perfect regularity and steadiness. The retreat was directed not towards Maestricht, where their principal dépôts were established, but towards Wavre, so as to be able to maintain their communication with Wellington's army, and still follow out the original plan of the campaign. The heroism with which the Prussians endured and repaired their defeat at Ligny is more glorious than many victories.

The messenger who was sent to inform Wellington of the retreat of the Prussian army was shot on the way; and it was not until the morning of the 17th that the Allies, at Quatre Bras, knew the result of the battle of Ligny. The Duke was ready at daybreak to take the offensive against the enemy with vigour, his whole army being by that time fully assembled. But on learning that Blücher had been defeated, a different course of action was clearly necessary. It was obvious that Napoleon's main army would now be directed against Wellington, and a retreat was inevitable. On ascertaining that the Prussian army had retired upon Wavre, that there was no hot pursuit of them by the French, and that Bulow's corps had taken no part in the action at Ligny, the Duke resolved to march his army back towards Brussels, still intending to cover that city, and to halt at a point in a line with Wavre, and there restore his communication with Blücher. An officer from Blücher's army reached the Duke about nine o'clock, from whom he learned the effective strength that Blücher still possessed, and how little discouraged his ally was by yesterday's battle. Wellington sent word to the Prussian commander that he would halt in the position of Mont St. Jean, and accept a general battle with the French, if Blücher would pledge himself to come to his assistance with a single corps of 25,000 men. This was readily promised; and after allowing his men ample time for rest and refreshment, Wellington retired over about half the space between Quatre Bras and Brussels. He was pursued, but little molested, by the main French army, which about noon of the 17th moved laterally from Ligny, and joined Ney's forces, which had advanced through Quatre Bras when the British abandoned

that position. The Earl of Uxbridge, with the British cavalry, covered the retreat of the Duke's army, with great skill and gallantry; and a heavy thunderstorm, with torrents of rain, impeded the operations of the French pursuing squadrons. The Duke still expected that the French would endeavour to turn his right, and march upon Brussels by the high road that leads through Mons and Hal. In order to counteract this anticipated manœuvre, he stationed a force of 18,000 men, under Prince Frederick of the Netherlands, at Hal, with orders to maintain himself there, if attacked, as long as possible. The Duke halted with the rest of his army at the position near Mont St. Jean, which, from a village in its neighbourhood, has received the ever-memorable name of the field of Waterloo.

Wellington was now about twelve miles distant, on a line running from west to east, from Wavre, where the Prussian army had now been completely reorganized and collected, and where it had been strengthened by the junction of Bulow's troops, which had taken no part in the battle of Ligny. Blucher sent word from Wavre to the Duke, that he was coming to help the English at Mont St. Jean in the morning, not with one corps, but with his whole army. The fiery old man only stipulated that the combined armies, if not attacked by Napoleon on the 18th, should themselves attack him on the 19th. So far were Blucher and his army from being in the state of annihilation described in the boastful bulletin by which Napoleon informed the Parisians of his victory at Ligny. Indeed, the French emperor seems himself to have been misinformed as to the extent of loss which he had inflicted on the Prussians. Had he known in what good order and with what undiminished spirit they were retiring, he would scarcely have delayed sending a large force to press them in their retreat until noon on the 17th. Such, however, was the case. It was about that time that he confided to Marshal Grouchy the duty of pursuing the defeated Prussians, and preventing them from joining Wellington. He placed for this purpose 32,000 men and 96 guns under his orders. Violent complaints and recriminations passed afterwards between the

Emperor and the marshal respecting the manner in which Grouchy attempted to perform this duty, and the reasons why he failed on the 18th to arrest the lateral movement of the Prussians from Wavre to Waterloo. It is sufficient to remark here that the force which Napoleon gave to Grouchy (though the utmost that the Emperor's limited means would allow) was insufficient to make head against the entire Prussian army, especially after Bulow's junction with Blücher. We shall presently have occasion to consider what opportunities were given to Grouchy during the 18th, and what he might have effected if he had been a man of original military genius.

But the failure of Grouchy was in truth mainly owing to the indomitable heroism of Blücher himself, who, though he had received severe personal injuries in the battle of Ligny, was as energetic and ready as ever in bringing his men into action again, and who had the resolution to expose a part of his army, under Thielman, to be overwhelmed by Grouchy at Wavre on the 18th, while he urged the march of the mass of his troops upon Waterloo. "It is not at Wavre, but at Waterloo," said the old field-marshal, "that the campaign is to be decided"; and he risked a detachment, and won the campaign accordingly. Wellington and Blücher trusted each other as cordially, and co-operated as zealously, as formerly had been the case with Marlborough and Eugene. It was in full reliance on Blücher's promise to join him that the Duke stood his ground and fought at Waterloo; and those who have ventured to impugn the Duke's capacity as a general ought to have had common-sense enough to perceive, that to charge the Duke with having won the battle of Waterloo by the help of the Prussians, is really to say that he won it by the very means on which he relied, and without the expectation of which the battle would not have been fought.

Napoleon himself has found fault with Wellington for not having retreated further, so as to complete a junction of his army with Blücher's before he risked a general engagement. But, as we have seen, the Duke justly considered it important to protect Brussels. He had reason to expect that his army

could singly resist the French at Waterloo until the Prussians came up; and that, on the Prussians joining, there would be a sufficient force united under himself and Blucher for completely overwhelming the enemy. And while Napoleon thus censures his great adversary, he involuntarily bears the highest possible testimony to the military character of the English, and proves decisively of what paramount importance was the battle to which he challenged his fearless opponent. Napoleon asks, "*If the English army had been beaten at Waterloo, what would have been the use of those numerous bodies of troops, of Prussians, Austrians, Germans, and Spaniards, which were advancing by forced marches to the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees?*"

The strength of the army under the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo was 49,608 infantry, 12,402 cavalry, and 5645 Strength of the opposing armies. artillerymen with 156 guns. But of this total of 67,655 men, scarcely 24,000 were British, a circumstance of very serious importance, if Napoleon's own estimate of the relative value of troops of different nations is to be taken. In the Emperor's own words, speaking of this campaign, "A French soldier would not be equal to more than one English soldier, but he would not be afraid to meet two Dutchmen, Prussians, or soldiers of the Confederation". There were about 6000 men of the old German Legion with the Duke; these were veteran troops, and of excellent quality. Of the rest of the army the Hanoverians and Brunswickers proved themselves deserving of confidence and praise. But the Nassauers, Dutch, and Belgians were almost worthless; and not a few of them were justly suspected of a strong wish to fight, if they fought at all, under the French eagles rather than against them.

Napoleon's army at Waterloo consisted of 48,950 infantry, 15,765 cavalry, 7232 artillerymen, being a total of 71,947 men, and 246 guns. They were the flower of the national forces of France; and of all the numerous gallant armies which that martial land has poured forth, never was there one braver, or better disciplined, or better led, than the host that took up its position at Waterloo on the morning of the 18th of June, 1815.

Perhaps those who have not seen the field of battle at Waterloo, or the admirable model of the ground, and of the conflicting armies, which was executed by Captain Siborne, may gain a generally accurate idea of the <sup>The positions of the two hosts.</sup> localities, by picturing to themselves a valley between two and three miles long, of various breadths at different points, but generally not exceeding half a mile. On each side of the valley there is a winding chain of low hills running somewhat parallel with each other. The declivity from each of these ranges of hills to the intervening valley is gentle but not uniform, the undulations of the ground being frequent and considerable. The English army was posted on the northern, and the French army occupied the southern ridge. The artillery of each side thundered at the other from their respective heights throughout the day, and the charges of horse and foot were made across the valley that has been described. The village of Mont St. Jean is situate a little behind the centre of the northern chain of hills, and the village of La Belle Alliance is close behind the centre of the southern ridge. The high road from Charleroi to Brussels (a broad paved causeway) runs through both these villages, and bisects therefore both the English and the French positions. The line of this road was the line of Napoleon's intended advance on Brussels.

There are some other local particulars connected with the situation of each army, which it is necessary to bear in mind. The strength of the British position did not consist merely in the occupation of a ridge of high ground. A village and ravine, called Merk Braine, on the Duke of Wellington's extreme right, secured his flank from being turned on that side; and on his extreme left, two little hamlets called La Haye and Papelotte gave a similar, though a slighter, protection. Behind the whole British position is the extensive forest of Soignies. As no attempt was made by the French to turn either of the English flanks, and the battle was a day of straightforward fighting, it is chiefly important to ascertain what posts there were in front of the British line of hills, of which advantage could be taken either to repel or facilitate an

attack; and it will be seen that there were two, and that each was of very great importance in the action. In front of the British right, that is to say, on the northern slope of the valley towards its western end, there stood an old-fashioned Flemish farmhouse called Goumont, or Hougoumont, with out-buildings and a garden, and with a copse of beech-trees of about two acres in extent round it. This was strongly garrisoned by the allied troops; and, while it was in their possession, it was difficult for the enemy to press on and force the British right wing. On the other hand, if the enemy could take it, it would be difficult for that wing to keep its ground on the heights, with a strong post held adversely in its immediate front, being one that would give much shelter to the enemy's marksmen, and great facilities for the sudden concentration of attacking columns. Almost immediately in front of the British centre, and not so far down the slope as Hougoumont, there was another farmhouse, of a smaller size, called La Haye Sainte, which was also held by the British troops, and the occupation of which was found to be of very serious consequence.

With respect to the French position, the principal feature to be noticed is the village of Planchenoit, which lay a little in the rear of their right (*i.e.* on the eastern side), and which proved to be of great importance in aiding them to check the advance of the Prussians.

Napoleon, in his memoirs, and other French writers, have vehemently blamed the Duke for having given battle in such a position as that of Waterloo. They particularly object that the Duke fought without having the means of a retreat, if the attacks of his enemy had proved successful; and that the English army, if once broken, must have lost all its guns in its flight through the Forest of Soignies, that lay in its rear. In answer to these censures, instead of merely referring to the event of the battle as proof of the correctness of the Duke's judgment, it is to be observed that many military critics of high authority have considered the position of Waterloo to have been admirably adapted for the Duke's purpose of protecting Brussels by a

Was the British  
ground well  
chosen?



battle; and that certainly the Duke's opinion in favour of it was not lightly or hastily formed. It is a remarkable fact (mentioned in the speech of Lord Bathurst when moving the vote of thanks to the Duke in the House of Lords), that when the Duke of Wellington was passing through Belgium in the preceding summer of 1814, he particularly noticed the strength of the position of Waterloo, and made a minute of it at the time, stating to those who were with him, that if it ever should be his fate to fight a battle in that quarter for the protection of Brussels, he should endeavour to do so in that position. And with respect to the Forest of Soignies, which the French (and some few English) critics have thought calculated to prove so fatal to a retreating force, the Duke, on the contrary, believed it to be a post that might have proved of infinite value to his army in the event of his having been obliged to give way. The Forest of Soignies has no thicket or masses of close-growing trees. It consists of tall beeches, and is everywhere passable for men and horses. The artillery could have been withdrawn by the broad road which traverses it towards Brussels; and in the meanwhile a few regiments of resolute infantry could have held the forest and kept the pursuers in check. One of the best writers on the Waterloo campaign, Captain Pringle, well observes that "every person, the least experienced in war, knows the extreme difficulty of forcing infantry from a wood which cannot be turned". The defence of the Bois de Bossu near Quatre Bras on the 16th of June had given a good proof of this; and the Duke of Wellington, when speaking in after-years of the possible events that might have followed if he had been beaten back from the open field of Waterloo, pointed to the wood of Soignies as his secure rallying-place, saying, "they never could have beaten us so that we could not have held the wood against them". He was always confident that he could have made good that post until joined by the Prussians, upon whose co-operation he throughout depended.

As has been already mentioned, the Prussians, on the morning of the 18th, were at Wavre, which is about twelve miles

to the east of the field of battle of Waterloo. The junction of Bulow's division had more than made up for the loss sustained at Ligny; and leaving Thielman with about seventeen thousand men to hold his ground, as he best could, against the attack which Grouchy was about to make on Wavre, Bulow and Blucher moved with the rest of the Prussians through St. Lambert upon Waterloo. It was calculated that they would be there by three o'clock; but the extremely difficult nature of the ground which they had to traverse, rendered worse by the torrents of rain that had just fallen, delayed them long on their twelve miles' march.

An army, indeed, less animated by bitter hate against the enemy than was the Prussians, and under a less energetic chief than Blucher, would have failed altogether in effecting a passage through the swamps, into which the incessant rain had transformed the greater part of the ground through which it was necessary to move not only with columns of foot, but with cavalry and artillery. At one point of the march, on entering the defile of St. Lambert, the spirits of the Prussians almost gave way. Exhausted in the attempts to extricate and drag forward the heavy guns, the men began to murmur. Blucher came to the spot, and heard cries from the ranks of—"We cannot get on". "But you *must* get on," was the old field-marshal's answer. "I have pledged my word to Wellington, and you surely will not make me break it. Only exert yourselves for a few hours longer, and we are sure of victory." This appeal from old "Marshal Forwards", as the Prussian soldiers loved to call Blucher, had its wonted effect. The Prussians again moved forward, slowly, indeed, and with pain and toil; but still they moved forward.

The French and British armies lay on the open field during the wet and stormy night of the 17th; and when the dawn of the memorable 18th of June broke, the rain was still descending heavily upon Waterloo. The rival nations rose from their dreary bivouacs, and began to form, each on the high ground which it occupied. Towards nine the weather grew clearer, and each army was able to watch the position and

arrangements of the other on the opposite side of the valley.

When his troops were all arrayed, Napoleon rode along the lines, receiving everywhere the most enthusiastic cheers from his men, of whose entire devotion to him his assurance was now doubly sure. On the northern side of the valley the Duke's army was also drawn up, and ready to meet the menaced attack.

Wellington had caused, on the preceding night, every brigade and corps to take up its station on or near the part of the ground which it was intended to hold in the coming battle. He had slept a few hours at his head-quarters in the village of Waterloo; and rising on the 18th, while it was yet deep night, he wrote several letters, to the Governor of Antwerp, to the English Minister at Brussels, and other official personages, in which he expressed his confidence that all would go well, but "as it was necessary to provide against serious losses should any accident occur", he gave a series of judicious orders for what should be done in the rear of the army, in the event of the battle going against the Allies. He also, before he left the village of Waterloo, saw to the distribution of the reserves of ammunition which had been parked there, so that supplies should be readily forwarded to every part of the line of battle where they might be required. The Duke, also, personally inspected the arrangements that had been made for receiving the wounded, and providing temporary hospitals in the houses in the rear of the army. Then, mounting a favourite charger, a small thorough-bred chestnut horse named "Copenhagen", Wellington rode forward to the range of hills where his men were posted. Accompanied by his staff and by the Prussian General Muffling, he rode along his lines, carefully inspecting all the details of his position. Hougoumont was the object of his special attention. He rode down to the south-eastern extremity of its enclosures, and after having examined the nearest French troops, he made some changes in the disposition of his own men, who were to defend that important post.

Having given his final orders about Hougoumont, the Duke galloped back to the high ground in the right centre of his position; and, halting there, sat watching the enemy on the opposite heights, and conversing with his staff with that cheerful serenity which was ever his characteristic in the hour of battle.

Not only to those who were thus present as spectators and actors in the dread drama, but to all Europe, the decisive contest then impending between the rival French and English nations, each under its chosen chief, was the object of exciting interest and deepest solicitude. "Never, indeed, had two such generals as the Duke of Wellington and the Emperor Napoleon encountered since the day when Scipio and Hannibal met at Zama. The two great champions, who now confronted each other, were equals in years, and each had entered the military profession at the same early age. The fortune of war had hitherto kept separate the orbits in which Napoleon and he had moved. Now, on the ever-memorable 18th of June, 1815, they met at last.

It is, indeed, remarkable that Napoleon, during his numerous campaigns in Spain as well as other countries, not only never encountered the Duke of Wellington before the day of Waterloo, but that he was never until then personally engaged with British troops, except at the siege of Toulon in 1793, which was the very first incident of his military career. Many, however, of the French generals who were with him in 1815, knew well, by sharp experience, what English soldiers were, and what the leader was who now headed them. Ney, Foy, and other officers who had served in the Peninsula, warned Napoleon that he would find the English infantry "very devils in fight". The Emperor, however, persisted in employing the old system of attack, with which the French generals often succeeded against continental troops, but which had always failed against the English in the Peninsula. He adhered to his usual tactics of employing the order of the column; a mode of attack probably favoured by him (as Sir Walter Scott

First meeting  
of Wellington  
and Napoleon.

remarks) on account of his faith in the extreme valour of the French officers by whom the column was headed. It is a threatening formation, well calculated to shake the firmness of ordinary foes; but which, when steadily met, as the English have met it, by heavy volleys of musketry from an extended line, followed up by a resolute bayonet charge, has always resulted in disaster to the assailants.

It was approaching noon before the action commenced. Napoleon, in his *Memoirs*, gives as the reason for this delay, the miry state of the ground through the heavy rain of the preceding night and day, which rendered it impossible for cavalry or artillery to manœuvre on it till a few hours of dry weather had given it its natural consistency. It has been supposed, also, that he trusted to the effect which the sight of the imposing array of his own forces was likely to produce on the part of the allied army. The Belgian regiments had been tampered with; and Napoleon had well-founded hopes of seeing them quit the Duke of Wellington in a body, and range themselves under his own eagles. The Duke, however, who knew and did not trust them, had guarded against the risk of this, by breaking up the corps of Belgians, and distributing them in separate regiments among troops on whom he could rely.

Battle begins  
at noon,  
June 18, 1815.

At last, at about half-past eleven o'clock, Napoleon began the battle by directing a powerful force from his left wing under his brother, Prince Jerome, to attack Hougoumont. Column after column of the French now descended from the west of the southern heights, and assailed that post with fiery valour, which was encountered with the most determined bravery. The French won the copse round the house, but a party of the British Guards held the house itself throughout the day. The whole of Byng's brigade was required to man this hotly-contested post. Amid shell and shot, and the blazing fragments of part of the buildings, this obstinate contest was continued. But still the English were firm in Hougoumont; though the French occasionally moved forward in such numbers as enabled them to surround and mask it

with part of their troops from their left wing, while others pressed onward up the slope and assailed the British right.

The cannonade, which commenced at first between the British right and the French left, in consequence of the attack on Hougomont, soon became general along both lines; and about one o'clock Napoleon directed a grand attack to be made under Marshal Ney upon the centre and left wing of the Allied Army. For this purpose four columns of infantry, amounting to about eighteen thousand men, were collected, supported by a strong division of cavalry under the celebrated Kellerman; and seventy-four guns were brought forward ready to be posted on the ridge of a little undulation of the ground in the interval between the two principal chains of heights, so as to bring their fire to bear on the Duke's line at a range of about seven hundred yards. By the combined assault of these formidable forces, led on by Ney, "the bravest of the brave", Napoleon hoped to force the left centre of the British position, to take La Haye Sainte, and then, pressing forward, to occupy also the farm of Mont St. Jean. He then could cut the mass of Wellington's troops off from their line of retreat upon Brussels, and from their own left, and also completely sever them from any Prussian troops that might be approaching.

The columns destined for this great and decisive operation descended majestically from the French line of hills, and gained the ridge of the intervening eminence, on which the batteries that supported them were now ranged. As the columns descended again from this eminence, the seventy-four guns opened over their heads with terrible effect upon the troops of the Allies that were stationed on the heights to the left of the Charleroi road. One of the French columns kept to the east, and attacked the extreme left of the Allies; the other three continued to move rapidly forwards upon the left centre of the allied position. The front line of the Allies here was composed of Bylandt's brigade of Dutch and Belgians. As the French columns moved up the southward slope of the height on which the Dutch and Belgians

French advance  
defeated.

stood, and the skirmishers in advance began to open their fire, Bylandt's entire brigade turned and fled in disgraceful and disorderly panic; but there were men more worthy of the name behind.

In this part of the second line of the Allies were posted Pack and Kempt's brigades of English infantry, which had suffered severely at Quatre Bras. But Picton was here as general of division, and not even Ney himself surpassed in resolute bravery that stern and fiery spirit. Picton brought his two brigades forward, side by side, in a thin, two-deep line. Thus joined together, they were not three thousand strong. With these Picton had to make head against the three victorious French columns, upwards of four times that strength, and who, encouraged by the easy rout of the Dutch and Belgians, now came confidently over the ridge of the hill. The British infantry stood firm; and as the French halted and began to deploy into line, Picton seized the critical moment. He shouted in his stentorian voice to Kempt's brigade: "A volley, and then charge!" At a distance of less than thirty yards that volley was poured upon the devoted first sections of the nearest column; and then, with a fierce hurrah, the British dashed in with the bayonet. Picton was shot dead as he rushed forward, but his men pushed on with the cold steel. The French reeled back in confusion. Pack's infantry had checked the other two columns, and down came a whirlwind of British horse on the whole mass, sending them staggering from the crest of the hill, and cutting them down by whole battalions. Ponsonby's brigade of heavy cavalry (the Union Brigade as it was called, from its being made up of the British Royals, the Scots Greys, and the Irish Inniskillings) did this good service. On went the horsemen amid the wrecks of the French columns, capturing two eagles and two thousand prisoners; onwards still they galloped, and sabred the artillerymen of Ney's seventy-four advanced guns; then, severing the traces and cutting the throats of the artillery horses, they rendered these guns totally useless to the French throughout the remainder of the day. While thus far advanced beyond the

British position and disordered by success, they were charged by a large body of French lancers, and driven back with severe loss, till Vandeleur's light horse came to their aid, and beat off the French lancers in their turn.

Equally unsuccessful with the advance of the French infantry in this grand attack had been the efforts of the French cavalry who moved forward in support of it, along the east of the Charleroi road. Somerset's cavalry of the English Household Brigade had been launched, on the right of Picton's division, against the French horse, at the same time that the English Union Brigade of heavy horse charged the French infantry columns on the left.

Somerset's brigade was formed of the Life Guards, the Blues, and the Dragoon Guards. The hostile cavalry, which Kellerman led forward, consisted chiefly of Cuirassiers. This steel-clad mass of French horsemen rode down some companies of German infantry near La Haye Sainte, and, flushed with success, they bounded onward to the ridge of the British position. The English Household Brigade, led on by the Earl of Uxbridge in person, spurred forward to the encounter, and in an instant the two adverse lines of strong swordsmen, on their strong steeds, dashed furiously together. A desperate and sanguinary hand-to-hand fight ensued, in which the physical superiority of the Anglo-Saxons, guided by equal skill and animated with equal valour, was made decisively manifest. Back went the chosen cavalry of France; and after them, in hot pursuit, spurred the English Guards. They went forward as far and as fiercely as their comrades of the Union Brigade; and, like them, the Household cavalry suffered severely before they regained the British position, after their magnificent charge and adventurous pursuit.

Napoleon's grand effort to break the English left centre had thus completely failed; and his right wing was seriously weakened by the heavy loss which it had sustained. Hougomont was still being assailed, and was still successfully resisting. Prussian troops appear in sight. Troops were now beginning to appear at the edge of the horizon on Napoleon's right,



which he too well knew to be Prussian, though he endeavoured to persuade his followers that they were Grouchy's men coming to their aid.

Grouchy was, in fact, now engaged at Wavre with his whole force, against Thielman's single Prussian corps, while the other three corps of the Prussian army were moving <sup>Where was Grouchy?</sup> without opposition, save from the difficulties of the ground, upon Waterloo. Grouchy believed, on the 17th, and caused Napoleon to believe, that the Prussian army was retreating by lines of march remote from Waterloo upon Namur and Maestricht. Napoleon learned only on the 18th, that there were Prussians in Wavre, and felt jealous about the security of his own right. He accordingly, before he attacked the English, sent Grouchy orders to engage the Prussians at Wavre without delay, *and to approach the main French army, so as to unite his communication with the Emperor's.* Grouchy entirely neglected this last part of his instructions; and in attacking the Prussians whom he found at Wavre, he spread his force more and more towards his right, that is to say, in the direction most remote from Napoleon. He thus knew nothing of Blücher's and Bülow's flank march upon Waterloo till six in the evening of the 18th, when he received a note which Soult by Napoleon's orders had sent off from the field of battle at Waterloo at one o'clock, to inform Grouchy that Bülow was coming over the heights of St. Lambert, on the Emperor's right flank, and directing Grouchy to approach and join the main army instantly, and crush Bülow. It was then too late for Grouchy to obey; but it is remarkable that as early as noon on the 18th, and while Grouchy had not proceeded as far as Wavre, he and his suite heard the sound of heavy cannonading in the direction of Planchenoit and Mont St. Jean. General Gérard, who was with Grouchy, implored him to march towards the cannonade, and join his operations with those of Napoleon, who was evidently engaged with the English. Grouchy refused to do so, or even to detach part of his force in that direction. He said that his instructions were to fight the Prussians at Wavre. He marched upon Wavre and fought

for the rest of the day with Thielman accordingly, while Blucher and Bulow were attacking the Emperor.

Napoleon had witnessed with bitter disappointment the rout of his troops,—foot, horse, and artillery,—which attacked the left centre of the English, and the obstinate resistance which the garrison of Hougoumont opposed to all the exertions of his left wing. He now caused the batteries along the line of high ground held by him to be strengthened, and for some time an unremitting and most destructive cannonade raged across the valley, to the partial cessation of other conflict. But the superior fire of the French artillery, though it weakened, could not break the British line, and more close and summary measures were requisite.

It was now about half-past three o'clock; and though Wellington's army had suffered severely by the unremitting

cannonade, and in the late desperate encounter, no  
At 2.30 P.M.

part of the British position had been forced. Napoleon determined therefore to try what effect he could produce on the British centre and right by charges of his splendid cavalry, brought on in such force that the Duke's cavalry could not check them. Fresh troops were at the same time sent to assail La Haye Sainte and Hougoumont, the possession of these posts being the Emperor's unceasing object. Squadron after squadron of the French cuirassiers accordingly ascended the slopes on the Duke's right, and rode forward with dauntless courage against the batteries of the British artillery in that part of the field. The artillerymen were driven from their guns, and the cuirassiers cheered loudly at their supposed triumph. But the Duke had formed his infantry in squares, and the cuirassiers charged in vain against the impenetrable hedges of bayonets, while the fire from the inner ranks of the squares told with terrible effect on their squadrons. Time after time they rode forward, with invariably the same result: and as they receded from each attack the British artillerymen rushed forward from the centres of the squares, where they had taken refuge, and plied their guns on the retiring horsemen. Nearly the whole of Napoleon's magnificent body of

heavy cavalry was destroyed in these fruitless attempts upon the British right. But in another part of the field fortune favoured him for a time. Two French columns of infantry from Donzelot's division took La Haye Sainte between six and seven o'clock, and the means were now given for organizing another formidable attack on the centre of the Allies.

There was no time to be lost—Blucher and Bulow were beginning to press hard upon the French right. As early as five o'clock, Napoleon had been obliged to detach Lobau's infantry and Domont's horse to check these new enemies. They succeeded in doing so for a time; but as larger numbers of the Prussians came on the field, they turned Lobau's right flank, and sent a strong force to seize the village of Planchenoit, which, it will be remembered, lay in the rear of the French right.

The design of the Allies was not merely to prevent Napoleon from advancing upon Brussels, but to cut off his line of retreat and utterly destroy his army. The defence of Planchenoit therefore became absolutely essential for the safety of the French, and Napoleon was obliged to send his Young Guard to occupy that village, which was accordingly held by them with great gallantry against the reiterated assaults of the Prussian left, under Bulow. Three times did the Prussians fight their way into Planchenoit, and as often did the French drive them out: the contest was maintained with the fiercest desperation on both sides, such being the animosity between the two nations that quarter was seldom given or even asked. Other Prussian forces were now appearing on the field nearer to the English left, whom also Napoleon kept in check, by troops detached for that purpose. Thus a large part of the French army was now thrown back on a line at right angles with the line of that portion which still confronted and assailed the English position. But this portion was now numerically inferior to the force under the Duke of Wellington, which Napoleon had been assailing throughout the day, without gaining any other advantage than the capture of La Haye Sainte. It is true that, owing to the gross misconduct of the greater

part of the Dutch and Belgian troops, the Duke was obliged to rely exclusively on his English and German soldiers, and the ranks of these had been fearfully thinned; but the survivors stood their ground heroically, and opposed a resolute front to every forward movement of their enemies.

All accounts of the battle show that the Duke was ever present at each spot where danger seemed the most pressing, "Who can pound the longest?" inspiring his men by a few homely and good-humoured words, and restraining their impatience to be led forward to attack in their turn. "Hard pounding this, gentlemen: we will try who can pound the longest", was his remark to a battalion, on which the storm from the French guns was pouring with peculiar fury. Riding up to one of the squares, which had been dreadfully weakened, and against which a fresh attack of French cavalry was coming, he called to them: "Stand firm, my lads; what will they say of this in England?" As he rode along another part of the line where the men had for some time been falling fast beneath the enemy's cannonade, without having any close fighting, a murmur reached his ear of natural eagerness to advance and do something more than stand still to be shot at. The Duke called to them: "Wait a little longer, my lads, and you shall have your wish." The men were instantly satisfied and steady. It was, indeed, indispensable for the Duke to bide his time. The premature movement of a single corps down from the British line of heights would have endangered the whole position, and have probably made Waterloo a second Hastings.

Napoleon had stationed himself during the battle on a little hillock near La Belle Alliance, in the centre of the French position. Here he was seated, with a large table from the neighbouring farmhouse before him, on which maps and plans were spread; and thence with his telescope he surveyed the various points of the field. Soult watched his orders close at his left hand, and his staff was grouped on horseback a few paces in the rear. Here he remained till near the close of the day, preserving the appearance at least of calmness, except some expressions of irritation

Napoleon's  
last hope.

which escaped him when Ney's attack on the British left centre was defeated. But now that the crisis of the battle was evidently approaching, he mounted a white Persian charger, which he rode in action because the troops easily recognized him by the horse's colour. He had still the means of effecting a retreat. His Old Guard had yet taken no part in the action. Under cover of it he might have withdrawn his shattered forces and retired upon the French frontier. But this would only have given the English and Prussians the opportunity of completing their junction; and he knew that other armies were fast coming up to aid them in a march upon Paris, if he should succeed in avoiding an encounter with them, and retreating upon the capital. A victory at Waterloo was his only alternative from utter ruin, and he determined to employ his Guard in one bold stroke more to make that victory his own.

Between seven and eight o'clock the infantry of the Old Guard was formed into two columns, on the declivity near La Belle Alliance. Ney was placed at their head. Napoleon himself rode forward to a spot by which his veterans were to pass; and as they approached, he raised his arm and pointed to the position of the Allies, as if to tell them that their path lay there. They answered with loud cries of *Vive l'Empereur!* and descended the hill from their own side, into that "valley of the shadow of death", while the batteries thundered with redoubled vigour over their heads upon the British line. The line of march of the columns of the Guard was directed between Hougomont and La Haye Sainte, against the British right centre; and at the same time the French under Donzelot, who had possession of La Haye Sainte, commenced a fierce attack upon the British centre, a little more to its left. This part of the battle has drawn less attention than the celebrated attack of the Old Guard; but it formed the most perilous crisis for the Allied Army; and if the Young Guard had been there to support Donzelot, instead of being engaged with the Prussians at Planchenoit, the consequences to the Allies in that part of the field must have been most serious. The French tirailleurs, who were posted in clouds in La Haye

Sainte and the sheltered spots near it, picked off the artillerymen of the English batteries near them: and, taking advantage of the disabled state of the English guns, the French brought some field-pieces up to La Haye Sainte, and commenced firing grape from them on the infantry of the Allies at a distance of not more than a hundred paces. The allied infantry here consisted of some German brigades, who were formed in squares, as it was believed that Donzelot had cavalry ready behind La Haye Sainte to charge them with, if they left that order of formation. In this state the Germans remained for some time with heroic fortitude, though the grape-shot was tearing gaps in their ranks, and the side of one square was literally blown away by one tremendous volley which the French gunners poured into it. The Prince of Orange in vain endeavoured to lead some Nassau troops to the aid of the brave Germans. The Nassauers would not, or could not, face the French; and some battalions of Brunswickers, whom the Duke of Wellington had ordered up as a reinforcement, at first fell back, until the Duke in person rallied them, and led them on. Having thus barred the farther advance of Donzelot, the Duke galloped off to the right to head his men who were exposed to the attack of the Imperial Guard. He had saved one part of his centre from being routed; but the French had gained ground and kept it; and the pressure on the allied line in front of La Haye Sainte was fearfully severe, until it was relieved by the decisive success which the British in the right centre achieved over the columns of the Guard.

The British troops on the crest of that part of the position which the first column of Napoleon's Guards assailed, were Maitland's brigade of British Guards, having Adams's brigade (which had been brought forward during the action) on their right. Maitland's men were lying down, in order to avoid as far as possible the destructive effect of the French artillery, which kept up an unrelenting fire from the opposite heights, until the first column of the Imperial Guard had advanced so far up the slope towards the British position that any further firing of the French artillerymen would have endangered their

own comrades. Meanwhile the British guns were not idle, but shot and shell ploughed fast through the ranks of the stately array of veterans that still moved imposingly on. Several of the French superior officers were at its head. Ney's horse was shot under him, but he still led the way on foot, sword in hand. The front of the massive column now was on the ridge of the hill. To their surprise they saw no troops before them. All they could discern through the smoke was a small band of mounted officers. One of them was the Duke himself. The French advanced to about fifty yards from where the British Guards were lying down, when the voice of one of the group of British officers was heard "Up, Guards, calling, as if to the ground before him, "Up, and at them!" Guards, and at them!" and at the words, as if by magic, up started before them a line of British Guards, four deep, and in the most compact and perfect order. They poured an instantaneous volley upon the head of the French column, by which no less than three hundred of those chosen veterans are said to have fallen. The French officers rushed forwards; and, conspicuous in front of their men, attempted to deploy them into a more extended line, so as to enable them to reply with effect to the British fire. But Maitland's brigade kept showering in volley after volley with deadly rapidity. The decimated column grew disordered in its vain efforts to expand itself into a more efficient formation. The right word was given at the right moment to the British for the bayonet-charge, and the brigade sprang forward with a loud cheer against their dismayed antagonists. In an instant the compact mass of the French spread out into a rabble, and they fled back down the hill, pursued by Maitland's men, who, however, returned to their position in time to take part in the repulse of the second column of the Imperial Guard.

This column also advanced with great spirit and firmness under the cannonade which was opened on it; and, passing by the eastern wall of Hougoumont, diverged slightly to the right as it moved up the slope towards the British position, so as to approach nearly the same spot where the first column had

surmounted the height and been defeated. This enabled the British regiments of Adams's brigade to form a line parallel to the left flank of the French column; so that while the front of this column of French Guards had to encounter the cannonade of the British batteries, and the musketry of Maitland's Guards, its left flank was assailed with a destructive fire by a four-deep body of British infantry, extending all along it. In such a position all the bravery and skill of the French veterans were vain. The second column, like its predecessor, broke and fled, taking at first a lateral direction along the front of the British line towards the rear of La Haye Sainte, and so becoming blended with the divisions of French infantry which under Donzelot had been assailing the Allies so formidably in that quarter. The sight of the Old Guard broken and in flight checked the ardour which Donzelot's troops had hitherto displayed. They, too, began to waver. Adams's victorious brigade was pressing after the flying Guard, and now cleared away the assailants of the allied centre. But the battle was not yet won. Napoleon had still some battalions in reserve near La Belle Alliance. He was rapidly rallying the remains of the first column of his Guards, and he had collected into one body the remnants of the various corps of cavalry, which had suffered so severely in the earlier part of the day. The Duke instantly formed the bold resolution of now himself becoming the assailant, and leading his successful though enfeebled army forward while the disheartening effect of the repulse of the Imperial Guard on the rest of the French army was still strong, and before Napoleon and Ney could rally the beaten veterans themselves for another and a fiercer charge. As the close approach of the Prussians now completely protected the Duke's left, he had drawn some reserves of horse from that quarter, and he had a brigade of Hussars under Vivian fresh and ready at hand. Without a moment's hesitation he launched these against the cavalry near La Belle Alliance. The charge was as successful as it was daring; and as there was now no hostile cavalry to check the British infantry in a forward movement, the Duke gave the

Advance of  
the whole  
British line.



long-wished for command for a general advance of the army along the whole line upon the foe. It was now past eight o'clock, and for nearly nine deadly hours had the British and German regiments stood unflinching under the fire of artillery, the charge of cavalry, and every variety of assault, which the compact columns or the scattered tirailleurs of the enemy's infantry could inflict. As they joyously sprang forward against the discomfited masses of the French, the setting sun broke through the clouds which had obscured the sky during the greater part of the day, and glittered on the bayonets of the Allies while they poured down into the valley and towards the heights that were held by the foe. The Duke himself was among the foremost in the advance, and personally directed the movements against each body of the French that essayed resistance. He rode in front of Adams's brigade, cheering it forward, and even galloped among the most advanced of the British skirmishers, speaking joyously to the men, and receiving their hearty shouts of congratulation. The bullets of both friends and foes were whistling fast round him; and one of the few survivors of his staff remonstrated with him for thus exposing a life of such value. "Never mind," was the Duke's answer; — "Never mind, let them fire away; the battle's won, and my life is of no consequence to me now." And, indeed, almost the whole of the French host was now in irreparable confusion. The Prussian army was coming more and more rapidly forwards on their right; and the Young Guard, which had held Planchenoit so bravely, was at last compelled to give way. Some regiments of the Old Guard in vain endeavoured to form in squares and stem the current. They were swept away, and wrecked among the waves of the fliers. Napoleon had placed himself in one of these squares: Marshal Soult, Generals Bertrand, Drouot, Corbineau, De Flahaut, and Gourgaud, were with him. The Emperor spoke "*Sauve qui peut!*" of dying on the field, but Soult seized his bridle and turned his charger round, exclaiming, "Sire, are not the enemy already lucky enough?" With the greatest difficulty, and only by the utmost exertion of the devoted officers round him, Napoleon

cleared the throng of fugitives, and escaped from the scene of the battle and the war which he and France had lost past all recovery. Meanwhile the Duke of Wellington still rode forward with the van of his victorious troops, until he reined up on the elevated ground near Rossomme. The daylight was now entirely gone; but the young moon had risen, and the light which it cast, aided by the glare from the burning houses and other buildings in the line of the flying French and pursuing Prussians, enabled the Duke to assure himself that his victory was complete. He then rode back along the Charleroi road toward Waterloo; and near La Belle Alliance he met Marshal Blucher. Warm were the congratulations that were exchanged between the Allied Chiefs. It was arranged that the Prussians should follow up the pursuit, and give the French no chance of rallying. Accordingly the British army, exhausted by its toils and sufferings during that dreadful day, did not advance beyond the heights which the enemy had occupied. But the Prussians drove the fugitives before them in merciless chase throughout the night. Cannon, baggage, and all the *matériel* of the army were abandoned by the French; and many thousands of the infantry threw away their arms to facilitate their escape. The ground was strewn for miles with the wrecks of their host. There was no rearguard, nor was even the semblance of order attempted. An attempt at resistance was made at the bridge and village of Genappe, the first narrow pass through which the bulk of the French retired. The situation was favourable; and a few resolute battalions, if ably commanded, might have held their pursuers at bay there for some considerable time. But despair and panic were now universal in the beaten army. At the first sound of the Prussian drums and bugles, Genappe was abandoned, and nothing thought of but headlong flight. The Prussians, under General Gneisenau, still followed and still slew; nor even when the Prussian infantry stopped in sheer exhaustion was the pursuit given up. Gneisenau still pushed on with the cavalry, and by an ingenious stratagem made the French believe that his infantry were still close on them, and scared

them from every spot where they attempted to pause and rest. He mounted one of his drummers on a horse which had been taken from the captured carriage of Napoleon, and made him ride along with the pursuing cavalry, and beat the drum whenever they came on any large number of the French. The French thus fled, and the Prussians pursued through Quatre Bras, and even over the heights of Frasne; and when at length Gueisenau drew bridle, and halted a little beyond Frasne with the scanty remnant of keen hunters who had kept up the chase with him to the last, the French were scattered through Gosselies, Marchiennes, and Charleroi; and were striving to regain the left bank of the river Sambre, which they had crossed in such pomp and pride not a hundred hours before.

No returns ever were made of the amount of the French loss in the battle of Waterloo; but it must have been immense, and may be partially judged of by the amount of killed and wounded in the armies of the conquerors. On this subject both the Prussian and British official evidence is unquestionably full and authentic. The figures are terribly emphatic.

Of the army that fought under the Duke of Wellington nearly 15,000 men were killed and wounded on this single day of battle. Seven thousand Prussians also fell at Waterloo. At such a fearful price was the deliverance of Europe purchased.

The killed and  
wounded.